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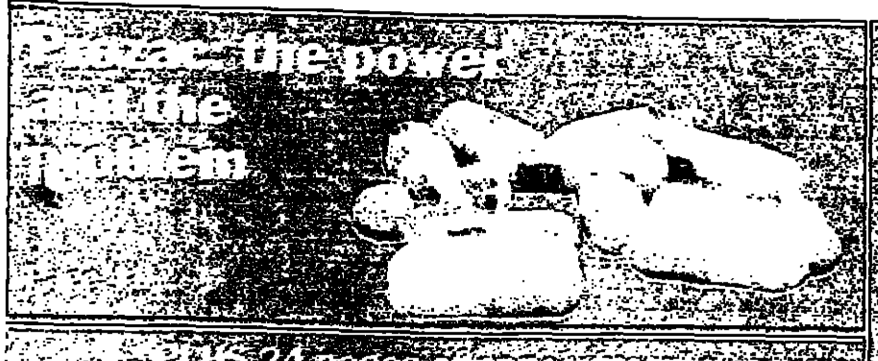

FREE BOOKS SCHOOLS
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Shakespeare theatre to live again
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Why we all love Gwyneth
Page 27

30p EVERY WEEKDAY

IRA defector dies while walking dog

Murder puts Ulster peace under strain

By Martin Fletcher, Chief Ireland Correspondent

REPUBLICANS were accused last night of murdering a prominent IRA defector who was found with severe head injuries minutes after he had apparently painted over graffiti predicting his death.

The body of Eamon Collins, a self-confessed IRA killer who exposed republican atrocities in the best-selling book *Killing Rage*, was found on a South Armagh country lane just before dawn.

Collins, 44, had gone for a walk with his spaniels shortly before 6am and was found dead at 6.18am. There was immediately intense speculation that he had been murdered by the IRA, and there were even unconfirmed reports that he had been severely beaten and then run over to make it look like an accident.

His death put the peace process under increased strain last night: if IRA involvement were proved, it would be a blatant breach of the Good Friday peace accord and the provisionals' own ceasefire. It would also mark a dramatic escalation of violence at a time when the IRA is facing renewed criticism for its "punishment beatings" — the subject of a Commons clash between the Prime Minister and William Hague yesterday, when the Tory leader said that Collins's death highlighted the need to end the early release of terrorist prisoners until punishment attacks stopped.

Collins: he knew that his life was in danger

Collins had himself spoken recently of his fear that his high profile might put him in danger. He told the *Irish News* journalist Martin Anderson that he intended to pull out of the public eye. "He did sound genuinely concerned," Mr Anderson said.

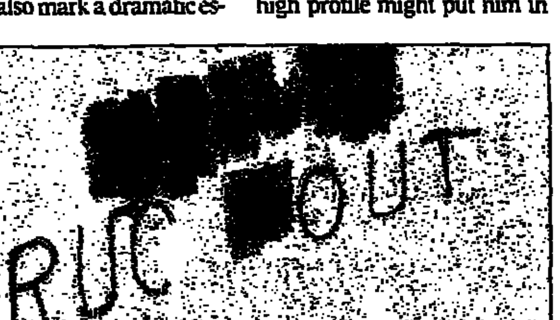
Collins blamed the IRA for a hit-and-run attack that left him badly injured in 1997, and last September a house was destroyed by arson just before he was due to move in with his wife and four children.

According to residents on the Barcroft Estate in Newry, Collins had only yesterday used black paint to cover up a large message on the gable end of a house reading: "Eamon Collins British Agent 1984 to 1999." A second piece of graffiti on an adjacent gable end had been changed from "Collins RUC Tout (informer)" to "RUC out".

Collins had informed on his former IRA colleagues after his arrest for 50 terrorist crimes, including five murders, but he later retracted his confession. He was cleared by a Belfast court on the ground that the confession was inadmissable, but the same statements led to a number of other IRA men being convicted.

He was exiled by the IRA, but returned to South Armagh and repeatedly exposed the organisation's work in print, on television and in court: last year he gave evidence against Slab Murphy, the former IRA chief of staff, in Murphy's unsuccessful libel case against *The Sunday Times*.

Supergrass, page 13
Leading article, page 23



he doctored graffiti near Collins's Newry home. He is said to have painted over the message early yesterday

Blair defends the release of prisoners despite beatings

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

THE longstanding bipartisan approach to the Northern Ireland peace process was under strain last night after Tony Blair refused to bow to increasing pressure to stop the early release of terrorist prisoners.

During heated exchanges in the Commons, the Prime Minister repeatedly told William Hague that calling a halt to the programme while punishment beatings continued would have "immense consequences" for the process.

Differences between the two main parties on the issue continued during a full-scale debate staged by the Opposition. By its end, the government policy of allowing releases to go on was backed by a majority of 202 — even though concerns about the beatings were voiced from all sides.

The clash earlier between Mr Blair and Mr Hague was the most serious since the Good Friday agreement last year. Mr Blair said that while he had legal authority to call a halt to releases, he could do so only if he made the judgment that the ceasefire was no longer holding. He admitted that it was "an imperfect process and and imperfect peace", but said that was better than no process and no peace at all.

But Mr Hague, rising five times to challenge the Prime Minister, said that paramilitaries must be held to blame for the beatings and insisted there was abundant evidence to justify putting the prisoner release programme on hold.

He told Mr Blair the "logical conclusion" of the Government's policy was that "every single terrorist could be released from prison without a single gun or bomb being given up and without an end to these mutilations". He raised the death of Eamon Collins as the temperature in the House rose.

Mr Blair pointed out that there had been punishment beatings during the ceasefire under the last Government but Labour had never wavered in its support of that Government. He alleged that Mr Hague, whom he said was well-intentioned, was being dragged along by others in his party who did not wish the agreement well.

True bipartisanship was not about talking about it, he told Mr Hague. It was about delivering it. "I simply say to Tory MPs, when you were in government we gave you that support through the difficult as well as the easy times."

Downing Street said later that the government assessment, based on security and other advice, was that the ceasefire was intact. Of themselves, the beatings were not a breach of the ceasefire.

It also pointed out that during part of 1996 when there had also been a ceasefire, the then Conservative Government had decided beatings had not breached it.

The Downing Street spokesman added: "None of that is to minimise our disgust at what these people do."

Mr Hague said that he was raising the matter on behalf of the families of the victims. He told Mr Blair that acts of intimidation and violence were being carried out on people in this country and asked if Parliament was not the place to raise these matters "then what is the House of Commons for"?

Ian Paisley, the Democratic Unionist leader, used parliamentary privilege to name Provisional IRA members he claimed were in a police dossier on the Kingsmill massacre, when ten protestants were shot by an armed gang, killers were walking the streets.

Debate, page 12

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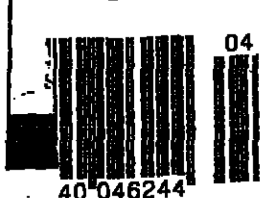


Three of the so-called Aden Five pleading their innocence at the opening of their trial yesterday. They claim they were tortured while under arrest

Muslim cleric's son arrested

From Daniel McGrory in Aden

The teenage son of a Muslim cleric suspected of masterminding terrorist operations from his London mosque was seized in Yemen yesterday.

Muhammed Kamil Mustapha and two other Britons were captured at what the Yemenis described as a mountain-top terrorist training camp, shortly before five other Britons went on trial accused of plotting bombings in Aden.

That trial was told that Kamil's father, Abu Hamza — who runs the extremist Supporters of Sharia group — had ordered the Christmas Day bombing of British targets in the port city.

Kamil, 17, who had been on the run since the police swooped on the other five on Christmas Eve, is alleged to have been a member of the bombing gang, and is also being questioned about the kidnap of 16 Western tourists which ended with the deaths of four of them.

After the arrest of the so-called Aden Five — who yesterday complained that they had been tortured while awaiting trial — Kamil and the other two Britons arrested yesterday are alleged to have fled to a camp run by Abu Hassan, the terrorist leader who has admitted abducting the Westerners on December 28.

Police were last night questioning Kamil in the capital, Sana'a, to see if he had any part in a kidnap in which the only ransom demanded was the release of the five Britons described by Abu Hassan as "my guests".

Abu Hamza later admitted that he spoke to the kidnap gang from his Finsbury Park mosque and the Yemeni authorities are seeking his extradition from Britain. They believe that the recent spate of Islamic outrages were funded, planned and manned from London, and insist that there were links between the tourists' kidnap and the alleged plot to bomb the British Consulate, an Anglican church, an international hotel and a nightclub.

Kamil and the other two Britons — named as Shaz Nabi and Ayub Hussein — were arrested after troops surrounded the camp on Ar Batan mountain, 240 miles northeast of Aden. Security sources said that the camp was shelled overnight and that six suspected terrorists gave up without a fight. The three Britons could now appear in the dock with the Aden Five when their trial reopens on Saturday.

Defence lawyers had asked for two weeks to prepare their case but were given only two days, and relatives of the defendants yesterday denounced the trial as a "sick joke".

As they were led in handcuffs to the dock, three of the Britons claimed that they had been sexually assaulted and the other two said that they had been tortured. Moshin Ghailan, 18, who is Abu Hamza's stepson, lifted up his bare feet to show his blackened soles, which he said were bruised from being hanged upside down and beaten.

The men's lawyer complained that their human rights had been abused and that they were being denied a fair trial. Relatives were told that they could see the men, but the Yemenis refused to let them be examined by a doctor the families have brought with them.

The Foreign Office confirmed last night that Yemen had told it that three Britons were among the latest wave of arrests, and said that British consular officials had asked for the "earliest possible" access to the men.

Torture claim, page 4

INSIDE

US support for Jordan

Doctors are treating King Hussein of Jordan for a relapse of non-Hodgkins lymphoma. A statement from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, said he was "in a stable conditon".

The king left Jordan abruptly on Tuesday after naming his 36-year-old son Abdullah as Crown Prince. The United States quickly showed its support. The Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will visit Amman today..........Page 19

Senate rules on Lewinsky

Monica Lewinsky and two presidential advisers must testify in person before the Senate, senators insisted, after blocking an attempt to scrap the trial of President Clinton. In a break with its tradition of "open government", the Senate plans to deploy a small team to question the three witnesses..........Page 17

Plough-to-plate saftey levy

A levy of £90 a year on nearly 500,000 food retail and catering premises was proposed yesterday to help to pay for a new food safety watchdog. The levy was the most controversial element in a draft Bill which will monitor safety from plough to plate..Page 11

Labour increases its poll lead

By Peter Riddell

TONY BLAIR and Labour have maintained their commanding lead in the opinion polls over the faltering Tories, brushing aside the Christmas wobbles and infighting following the resignation from the Cabinet of Peter Mandelson.

The latest MORI poll for *The Times*, undertaken last weekend, shows that Labour's rating has improved over the past month to equal the highest level since autumn 1997, rising two points to 56 per cent. By contrast, the Tories have fallen back three points to 24 per cent, equal to the lowest level for 18 months since just after William Hague became party leader. The Liberal Democrats are two points up at 14 per cent over the month.

The poll will stir up the internal Tory argument about why the party is failing to capitalise on the Government's self-inflicted difficulties.

Labour is still being given the benefit of the doubt even though the public is highly critical over "sleaze", is worried about the state of the health service and is pessimistic about the economic outlook.

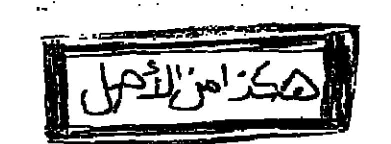
More than half the public (52 per cent) believes the Government has not upheld high standards in public life, while only just over a third (35 per cent) believe it has. This is an almost exact reversal of the position in November 1997 when 55 per cent thought the Government was then upholding high standards in public life, while 28 per cent believed it was not.

At the same time, the number of people regarding the NHS as among the most important issues facing Britain today has jumped from 34 to 49 per cent over the past month.

The MORI economic optimism index, measuring the balance of those who think that the general economic condition of the country will improve rather than get worse over the next 12 months, remains negative. But following further falls in interest rates, the index has improved to minus 23 points this month compared with minus 30 points in mid-December.

The public still has faith in Mr Blair and the Government and continues to prefer Labour over the Tories by a big margin. Mr Blair continues

Continued on page 2, col 1



Paisley plays havoc with reporters' volume control

GRAVE though the impact may be outside the Chamber of Ian Paisley's speech yesterday naming suspects, this sketch was distracted by its impact on unfortunate *Hansard* reporters in the gallery. Tiny loudspeakers are plugged into their ears.

Speaking quietly, Paisley had the reporters turning up their volume knobs. Then, every fiftieth word or so, he suddenly yelled. Reporters kept rocketing from their seats, faces contorted in pain.

By then, Teresa Gorman (C. Billericay), had left. It had not been her finest afternoon. It is so important not to confuse Britain's leading trade union with Billericay's favourite cocktail.

The brassy but bright lady from Essex had arrived at Prime Minister's Questions armed with killer quotes from trade union leaders critical of Tony Blair's Government. Mrs Gorman put these to the PM. The second quote was from the Transport and General.

Mrs G opted for acronyms. She muddled T&G with G&T. Dennis Skinner noisily conveyed her order to imaginary bar-staff.

Gorman lacks pomposity. Amused at her own gaffe, she re-phrased: "one of Britain's major trades unions". In the laughter, Blair had time to marshal a response.

A light moment in a sombre day. William Hague got his hooks into punishment beatings in Northern Ireland and wouldn't let go. Blair was indignant: Hague sounded sincere, forcing him onto the back foot.

Cornered, Mr Blair twice defended his refusal to interrupt prisoner-release by declaring that this would signal the end of the Good Friday agreement. It would now.

Hague's claim that soon the Government would have no bargaining-chips left did seem to resonate in the Chamber. Blair's charge that Hague was being arm-twisted by those who hated the Good Friday agreement hit home too. Both charges were lustily cheered by their sponsoring gangs.

Never one for gang-warfare, Paddy Ashdown tried to change the subject. Having foreshadowed his resignation a week before, this was his first appearance in the tail-feathers of lame-duck leader. He quacked gamely, betraying both the strengths and the weaknesses which have characterised his parliamentary performances.

His question (alleging false-accounting in Government figures for pensioners' incomes) was thoughtful, unflashy and doggedly anchored in the lives of ordinary people. Ashdown habitually tries to wrench MPs' gaze away from the party-political bear-pit.

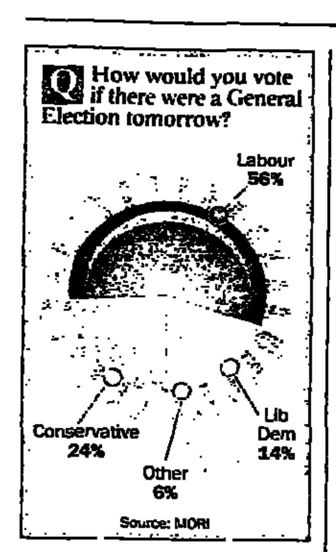
But he showed no instinct for the jugular and lacked the nimbleness or stage-presence to press his charges home. This too is habitual. Offstage, Paddy Ashdown is not wooden: I have often suspected that even after all these years he suffers from stage-fright.

Ashdown is at his best when relaxed. When he cannot be relaxed he is at his best when rehearsed. His prepared opening quip worked well. To the usual groans as he rose, the outgoing Liberal Democrat leader declared "You'll miss me when I'm gone!" The humour was well-taken.

Still, six months remain of what are positively Mr Ashdown's last performances. One of those dreadful Wagnerian three-quarter hours which seem to last an age, labouring with tortured emphasis towards a much-postponed climax, is in store for us political theatregoers. It is set to last through three elections and until summer rings down the curtain.

No, yesterday was not the end. It was not even the beginning of the end. But it was, perhaps, the snuggling down with a choc-ice for the thing interval before the curtain rises for the final act.

Lights dim. I have read and re-read the programme for the Lib Dems' *Der Meisterführer* but I still don't get the plot.



Labour up

Continued from page 1

to enjoy very favourable ratings. By a roughly two-to-one margin the public is satisifed rather than dissatisfied with his performance. Half the public is dissatisfied with the way that Mr Hague is doing his job as Conservative leader with less than a quarter (23 per cent) satisfied.

One paradoxical twist is that Paddy Ashdown's announcement a week ago that he intends to stand down as leader of the Liberal Democrats this summer has boosted his own ratings. The net balance satisfied rather than dissatisfied with the way he is doing his job is now plus 39 points, up 12 on last month.

MORI interviewed a representative quota sample of 1930 adults at 163 sampling points on January 22 to 25. Data were weighted to match the profile of the population. Voting intention figures exclude those who would not vote (11 per cent), are undecided (6 per cent) or who refused to say (1 per cent).

Dobson admits NHS morale has slumped

By Ian Murray, Medical Correspondent

FRANK DOBSON admitted yesterday that NHS morale is generally low, with a shortage of at least 9,000 nurses, problems in recruiting inner-city GPs and a danger of care standards falling.

The Health Secretary was giving evidence on staffing levels to the Commons Health Select Committee. He said: "The major issue is the recruitment of nurses. I know that we face a serious nursing shortage and we have had that shortage for several years but it is worse now. In some places we also have a shortage of physiotherapists and midwives as well.

"Most of what we want to do to improve the NHS is dependent on getting more nurses," he said. Shortages were especially serious in London, Manchester and Liverpool.

He agreed that pay levels were at least in part to blame but said he was "pretty hopeful" that there would be a generous rise for nurses when the independent pay review body reports, probably next week. The settlement, he said, would be affordable and he expected it to be paid in full.

He was now hoping to streamline the pay system for the future because the present settlement was based on what he believed were too many different grades of nurses, each with its own pay scale.

He wanted to work towards having three instead of six grades in the NHS. These could be called registered, advanced or specialist nurse practitioners.

"Under that system, nurses would be rewarded for the work they do and the responsibilities they carry rather than by the grade they are in," he said. Flexible working hours were also crucial if more were to be recruited or some of the 140,000 qualified nurses not working in the profession were to be lured back to the health service.

Mr Dobson admitted that another problem stopping recruitment was racism inside the NHS. "The treatment of black nursing and midwifery staff is a disgrace," he said. Black people whose parents had worked as nurses in the NHS were put off following the same career because they knew how badly they had been treated.

Treasury sticks to pay rise limits

By Roland Watson and Jill Sherman

THE Treasury made clear last night that the Government would not make extra cash available to fund public-sector pay awards, as Frank Dobson gave his strongest signal that junior nurses would get an 11 per cent pay rise next year.

Their pay increases, together with rises of 4.7 per cent for other nurses, will be published on Monday alongside settlements for other public-sector workers. It emerged yesterday that Mr Dobson has ordered an inquiry into the leak of the figure, which until now health ministers and officials have refused to confirm.

The Tories are to press the Government to fund the pay awards for nurses and teachers in full, finding the extra cash from central reserves. But Alan Milburn, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said the Government was determined to stick to departmental cash limits.

Steve Norman, left, and drummer John Keeble arriving at the High Court yesterday

Spandau Ballet argue over share of the gold

SPANDAU BALLET, the band that pioneered the New Romantic pop of the early 1980s, was locked in a bitter High Court battle yesterday over song royalties.

The creative force behind the band was Gary Kemp, but three other members claim that he reneged on an agreement to split publishing profits with them.

Tony Hadley, 37, the singer, John Keeble, 38, the drummer, and Steve Norman, 38, the lead guitarist, claim they are owed hundreds of thousands of pounds from royalty cheques paid into an account run by 39-year-old Mr Kemp.

Tony Hadley, left, and Gary Kemp, who wrote the songs

The three have fallen on leaner times since the hugely successful group disbanded at the end of the decade and Gary Kemp, along with his brother, Martin, the fifth member of the band, went on to pursue film careers including their portrayals of Reggie and Ronnie Kray.

Gary Kemp, who wrote such hits as *True* and *Gold*, argues that there was never any verbal agreement and he gave up some of his songwriting royalties only to help to meet the cost of running the group.

He is so upset by the legal action that, before the case opened yesterday, he issued a statement through his solicitors saying it "besmirched the history of the band I was proud off. These songs were written by me as long as 20 years ago and only in the last 18 months has this claim been made."

Andrew Sutcliffe, for the three plaintiffs, described how, from the humble beginnings of a school band in North London, Spandau Ballet went on to sell millions of records after establishing "something of a cult following among smart people with interesting haircuts".

Their earnings were split equally between the band members and their manager, Steve Dagger. The plaintiffs say that they were told by both Kemp and Mr Dagger that the songwriter would receive half the royalties and that all members of the band would receive the other half. The hearing continues.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Boateng slates social services

The Home Office Minister Paul Boateng yesterday said that old-fashioned social services chiefs were running away from the dangers of child abuse and allowing paedophiles to flourish.

An unnamed social services director dismissed the Government's plans for a register of sex offenders as mad and said that it opened "a can of worms", according to a report by the Inspectorate of Constabulary.

Mr Boateng said: "What appals me is the failure at the highest levels of management. They would rather turn a blind eye. They have been complicit in failing children."

Office politics

The Cabinet Office, the department at the heart of government, is severely criticised by the public spending watchdog for failing to provide detailed final accounts of three agencies which were privatised more than two years ago.

Air safety memo

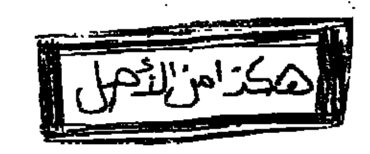
Guy Stephenson, a consultant who wrote a Civil Aviation Authority memo suggesting a "trade off" between safety and productivity, was suspended. The paper was written for the team working on the planned sale of air traffic control.

Police blamed

Police restraints contributed to the death of Nathan Delahunty, 29, from Battersea, South London, a jury at Westminster Coroner's Court decided. He was taken to hospital in a police van after becoming unstable from a cocaine dose.

Bishop in private

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cardiff, the Most Reverend John Ward, 70, has cancelled all his public duties after his arrest over allegations that he sexually assaulted a young girl nearly 40 years ago. He denies the allegation.



Diamond's husband is fined £1,200 and banned

Hollingsworth says row with girlfriend ended his marriage, reports Claudia Joseph

THE showbusiness agent husband of Anne Diamond was fined and banned from driving yesterday after a court was told of a violent row with a former girlfriend at a Halloween party that led to a night in the cells.

After the hearing, Mike Hollingsworth, who was left with a black eye from the row with Harriet Scott, a radio disc jockey, said it also spelt the end of his marriage to the television presenter. Miss Diamond is seeking a divorce.

Having been fined £1,200 and banned for a year after admitting failing to provide a breath test, Hollingsworth said: "I'm glad that the court finally got to hear what the truth of the matter was.

"What happened was very sad and has cost me quite dearly. It dealt what was probably the final blow to my marriage and lost me somebody that I considered to be a very good friend who I was very fond of."

Reading magistrates were told that Hollingsworth, 52, lived with Miss Diamond and their four children in Oxford until they separated last year. On the night of Halloween he and Miss Scott, 26, had been invited to a party, hosted by one of her friends, and the couple had checked into the Holiday Inn in Caversham, Reading.

The evening had turned into a disaster when Miss Scott had accused Hollingsworth of flirting with other women and a violent row had ensued in which Miss Scott had tried to grab him round the throat and he had slapped her face.

Sasha Wass, for the defence, said: "During the course of the evening, things began to turn sour. The young lady in question became very angry and she accused Mr Hollingsworth of paying attention to other women.

"Her reactions were extreme. He decided to take her outside to try and calm her down and avoid embarrassment of any sort. He was genuinely concerned about her.

"But outside she became more extreme. She was hysterical. She began using physical force against my client. She hit him repeatedly and, at one stage, tried to grab him around the throat.

"Mr Hollingsworth was in a quandary as to how to deal with a person in such a hysterical state. One solution is you can try and slap them around the face to shock them into being calm. That is what Mr Hollingsworth did. It had the desired effect for some time."

Miss Wass told the court the couple were planning to return to their hotel when Miss Scott became agitated again, so he deliberated over whether to take her to hospital. In the end he had driven her to Reading police station where he had been arrested after refusing to take a breath test.

Ravi Sidhu, for the prosecution, told the court that Hollingsworth arrived at the police station at 2.25am on November 1 to seek advice and had another row with Miss Scott in the car park. He had been taken into the police station where officers smelt alcohol on his breath and noted "his speech was slurred, his eyes were glazed and he was unsteady on his feet". However, Hollingsworth did not want to listen and "was waving his arms in the air and mumbling that he hadn't driven and therefore would not provide a specimen of breath".

Police had finally decided that his behaviour amounted to a refusal to provide a breath specimen and had locked him in the cells for the night.

Miss Wass claimed the police had misread the situation and blamed Hollingsworth's behaviour on concern for Miss Scott and frustration with the police. She said: "In a nutshell this is an offence that need never have been committed. There was a domestic argument. Mr Hollingsworth admits his guilt and doesn't wish to shy away from this. He was caught up in a series of events in which he was really the victim rather than the culprit."

She said that Hollingsworth had not seen Miss Scott since he was arrested and claimed that she had capitalised on the publicity the case had attracted.

She told the court: "Mr Hollingsworth was genuinely fond of Miss Scott and in return she was keen on the publicity which went with the relationship.

"There have been numerous articles in which she's been interviewed and she has described herself on radio, I understand, as Rocky, which you know is a prize fighter. She has achieved her 15 minutes of fame."

Last night Miss Scott denied she had provoked Hollingsworth into hitting her. She also said: "The implication that I have achieved 15 minutes of fame appears to be that I have somehow gained from this experience. I believe this is grossly unfair and feel deeply hurt by the accusation.

"I have stringently avoided discussing this matter in public and have indeed turned down numerous financial offers from newspapers and magazines to tell my side of the story."

Howard Davies, chairman of the bench, offered Hollingsworth the chance to reduce the ban by three months by taking a £230 course for offenders but he declined the offer.

The court was told that Mr Hollingsworth had not seen Harriet Scott, left, since the row that he said spelt the end of his marriage to Miss Diamond, right

Paramedics thought killer was play-acting after death of friend

By Russell Jenkins

A KEEN amateur actor gave every sign of suffering from deep shock shortly after she is alleged to have bludgeoned and stabbed her lover's wife to death, Chester Crown Court was told yesterday.

Jenny Cupit, 24, a mother of two, rocked backwards and forwards in her chair, sobbing between bouts of hysteria as she haltingly told police officers of an armed intruder who broke into the house, shut her away and then killed her friend in the next room with a knife. But paramedics were convinced that Cupit, from Orford, near Warrington, was play-acting when, moments later, she appeared to collapse and faint as she was led out of the house to an ambulance.

One paramedic later expressed surprise that her vital signs, including heart rate, appeared normal so soon after she saw Kathryn Linaker, 34, a primary school deputy head, bleed to death at her home in Penketh, near Warrington. Kenneth Fellowes, an ambulance officer, said: "The young girl dropped to the floor. It was as if she was acting — it was done to prevent herself from hurting herself as she fell.

"The girl's eyes were closed, she was deliberately holding them shut. I said to get back on her feet and she got up and walked to the ambulance."

Earlier the jury was told that Mrs Linaker met her husband, Chris, a trainee computer consultant, and later Cupit and her husband, Nick, through the Warrington Centenary Operatic and Dramatic Society.

They became a regular "foursome" through their mutual interest, but the prosecution alleges that Cupit had been conducting an affair with the dead woman's husband for more than a year.

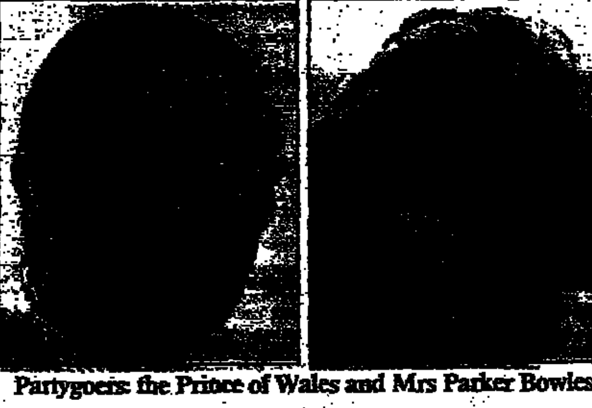
She is said to have urged Mr Linaker to leave his wife and run away with her to Canada. She was motivated by a deep envy of Mrs Linaker's good looks, lifestyle, home and happy family, the court was told.

Cupit, a hairdresser, is alleged to have murdered Mrs Linaker in a fit of jealous rage last April, stabbing and bludgeoning her with a kitchen knife, a carving knife and a heavy glass bottle. She denies murder, but has pleaded guilty to manslaughter on the ground of diminished responsibility. The plea is being contested by the Crown.

Cupit wept quietly as a recording of the 999 call made by her mother-in-law was played. The jury heard the operator make repeated attempts to find out from Cupit whether the victim was still breathing. Finally Cupit tells the operator: "She is my best friend ... she's my best friend." Police arrived to find Cupit apparently hysterical, screaming and "rocking back and forth". Her right hand had been cut and her jeans were heavily bloodstained.

John Hood, a police surgeon who examined Cupit in hospital, said he found no signs that she was suffering any symptoms of mental illness. He said in a statement that Cupit told him that she had developed bulimia in 1995 soon after the birth of her youngest child and had taken Prozac for it.

He found blood on the left of her forehead, left cheek, right ear, the front of her neck and her forearm. He said the wound on her right hand was consistent with her hand slipping down the shaft of a knife onto the blade. The trial continues.



Partygoers: the Prince of Wales and Mrs Parker Bowles

Together at last for the cameras?

By Alan Hamilton

PHOTOGRAPHERS were already crowding the pavement outside the Ritz in Central London last night on the strength of a rumour that the Prince of Wales and Camilla Parker Bowles may this evening allow themselves to be seen in public together for the first time.

The couple are expected as guests at a dinner-dance to celebrate the 50th birthday of Mrs Parker Bowles's younger sister, Annabel Elliott. Until now they have gone to great lengths to avoid being pictured together, although their relationship has long been common knowledge.

Earlier this evening the Prince is to host a charity dinner at St James's Palace, but is expected to look in later at the Ritz party. Mrs Parker Bowles is said to be planning to spend the entire evening at the party. A source said last night: "It's a family party and they are both invited. These things cannot be scripted, but it would be natural for them to leave together."

Cameramen have spent more than ten years waiting in vain for a chance to capture the Prince and his long-standing companion in the same frame. Sources also said last night that too much advance publicity might deter the couple from a joint appearance.

Since the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, in August 1997, the couple have appeared reticent about testing public opinion, but the Prince is believed to feel that the relationship must be brought fully into the open sooner or later.

They have been to clubs and restaurants together but have always kept the lowest of profiles. Yet Mrs Parker Bowles stays regularly overnight at St James's Palace, and has now met Prince William and Prince Harry on several occasions.

Chat with dad turns boys into better men

By Mark Henderson

FATHERS who devote time to their sons — even as little as five minutes a day — are giving them a far greater chance to grow up as confident adults, a parenting research project has found.

Boys who feel that their fathers devote time especially to them and talk about their worries, schoolwork and social lives almost all emerge as motivated and optimistic young men full of confidence and hope, according to results to be published next month.

The study, the latest from the Tomorrow's Men project supported by Oxford University and funded by Top Man, picked out youngsters with high-self esteem, happiness and confidence as successful "can-do kids", and looked in depth at their parental and social backgrounds. More than 1,500 boys aged 13 to 19 were surveyed.

"High-level fathering", it found, was much the most important factor in success. More than 90 per cent of boys who felt that their fathers spent quality time with them and took an active interest in their progress emerged in the "can-do" category.

By contrast, 72 per cent of those who felt that their fathers rarely or never did these things fell into the group with the lowest levels of self-esteem and confidence, and were more likely to be depressed, to dislike school and to get into trouble with the police.

The raw amount of time spent with sons was not significant - what was important was the boy's perception. Adrienne Katz, of the Tomorrow's Men project, said: "With some children, a five-minute chat at the end of a busy day can be terrific, and with others that's not enough. It is all about making the child feel wanted, loved and listened to."

The study found little difference between the positive effects of a good relationship with a father in a standard two-parent family, and with an absent father who nevertheless made the effort to make time for family. "Whatever the shape or form of a family, if you can get it together it makes a difference."

Among the "can-do" group, three-quarters said that they felt their parents listened to them, compared with 27 per cent in the low-esteem group; 83 per cent said that their parents were helpful; and 70 per cent said they were allowed to make their own decisions.

Families who spent significant amounts of time together as a unit were also more likely to turn out confident children.

Student cashes in on magic card

By Matthew Barbour

A STUDENT trying to close his bank account yesterday instead found the perfect solution to clearing his overdraft — a cash card that let him empty three cash machines of £35,350.

Donal Knox, a 22-year-old student of Spanish at Leeds University, ran out of pockets and had to stuff the money into a carrier bag with his overdue library books as the notes kept pouring out.

His magic card started its work as he tried to withdraw £300 from a Barclays' branch in the city. On taking out the fourth batch of £100, he realised something was amiss. "It just wouldn't stop throwing money at me," he said.

"The first few times I pressed the £100 button but quickly realised it was bottomless and started on the £200 option. It ran out of £10 notes and then ran out of twenties, so I went to the Midland bank around the corner." Two cash machines in the bank there also succumbed to his card.

Three hours and three empty cashpoints later Mr Knox re-entered his Barclays branch and opened an Instant Saver account with £35,350 in cash.

The reason for the uncharacteristic generosity of the cashpoint machines is still unclear. Mr Knox, from New Hampshire, opened the account with Tribanco, the state-owned bank of Panama, while spending a year there as part of his course. The card was given to him by Tribanco.

Finally, worried that a team of Central American debt-collectors might soon be on their way to Leeds, Mr Knox decided to telephone the head office in Panama to alert them to the error.

"They seemed completely nonplussed and said they would ring me back," he said. Tribanco said they were unable to comment until they had completed their inquiries.

'We will never get out of here alive'

Britons claim torture and abuse at Yemen terrorism trial

FROM DANIEL MCGRORY IN ADEN

DISPLAYING bruises and claiming weeks of torture, five Britons sat through the chaotic start to their terrorist trial yesterday fearful of a certain death sentence.

As Shahid Butt, 33, a finance student from Birmingham, was dragged in handcuffs from the dock by troops, he shouted to his brother: "They are going to beat us and kill us for denying their ridiculous charges, so help us". Two others in the dock tried to fight off soldiers long enough to describe alleged sexual abuse by their interrogators.

One young officer put his hand across the mouth of Mohsin Ghalain, 18, an engineering student from London, and pulled him from the dock by his torn shirt as he cried out: "We will never get out this country alive, no matter what we say or do". Mr Ghalain had already lifted up his bare feet to show soles black with bruising. He says that he was hung upside down and his feet beaten repeatedly with canes.

Sitting 4ft away from the wooden dock that was by now submerged under the bodies of a dozen soldiers, Monica Davis was forced aside with a rifle butt as she tried to reach out to her husband, Ghulam Hussein, 25, a security guard from Luton. He shouted to her but tripped and fell headlong as he was bundled away with his arms behind his back.

"You don't have to treat him like an animal," she screamed, dissolving into tears. "Look how scared and ill he looks."

Malik Nassar Harhra, 26, an information technology graduate from Birmingham, was slapped as he tried to wave to his father and Sarmad Ahmed, 21, a computing student from Birmingham, was lifted off his feet and hauled away as he pointed to dark bruises all along his arms.

Their first court appearance after a month in custody had lasted barely 50 minutes. For most of it, the men sat bewildered, unable to follow the acrimonious legal arguments going on in Arabic. When an elderly translator was provided after 25 minutes, he struggled to keep pace and startled the Britons by telling them that the prosecutor wanted them executed. They had been told that the worst they could expect was ten years in prison.

The five turned anxiously to one another as Mr Hussein's sister, Zafran Begun, cried out in disbelief. Even the men's own lawyers seemed unsure what punishment they might face as the judge threatened to expel the defence team if they complained any more about his handling of events in Aden's Appeal Court. One of their lawyers, Badr Basunaid, said later: "If this sort of farcical behaviour continues, I will walk out because there is no chance of a fair trial."

Before the five had arrived, television cameras were allowed to film weaponry and explosives that the Britons were allegedly given to blow up targets in Aden on Christmas Day. Soldiers elbowed each other aside to pile an armoury on a desk in front of the judge's dais. There were landmines, bazookas, a grenade, fuse wire, detonators and a sackful of 15 blocks of TNT wrapped in red and left sweating in the stifling heat.

At the front of this display, a senior officer carefully propped up three audio cassettes plastered with the logo of the Supporters of Sharia, the extremist group run from a London mosque by the handicapped cleric Abu Hamza. The prosecution's opening sentence was: "This offence started in London in the offices of Ansar Sharia (SOS) which is owned by Abu Hamza and who exports terrorism to other countries." Of the accused Britons, Moshin Ghailan is the cleric's stepson and Mr Ahmed is alleged to be the information officer for SOS. Also in the dock is an Algerian, Abdraham James, who is believed to be engaged to a close relative of the cleric.

All the men were still in the same soiled and torn clothes they were wearing when arrested on Christmas Eve. When the judge, Gamal Ahmed Omar, asked them all a series of quickfire questions about their backgrounds, only Mr Harhra, who has joint Anglo-Yemeni citizenship, could understand and answered in Arabic. The judge struggled to comprehend Mr Ghailan's repeated mention of Shepherds Bush, which the teenage student gave as his West London address.

As he took his place in the dock, Mr Ghailan told *The Times* how he had not been allowed to sleep for the first week of his arrest. "I lay on a concrete floor, no mattress and if I dozed off they would kick me and question me some more. Then they sexually abused me. I had sticks, a Coca-Cola bottle and fingers shoved up my arse. They also gave me electric shocks to make me sign a confession. They even make us go to the lavatory in handcuffs. It's monstrous."

He tugged at his dyed red hair as he told how, on the eve of the trial, he had been taken on a 500-mile round journey to the capital, Sanaa, and forced to identify other alleged terrorists: "I didn't recognise them but they say they are part of my gang. They are mad but they are going to damage us if we don't get out soon".

Mr Ahmed was the most animated in the dock. Like the others, he denied charges of "planning to form an armed gang to carry out murder, sabotage and bombing". As he made his denial, he shouted to the judge: "When the prison guards find out we have refused these charges, they are going to kill us."

Mr Butt, a father of four, finished giving his answers by turning to his brother, Rashid, and saying: "This is a kangaroo court." The last to answer was Mr Hussein, who had to repeat his job, "security officer", several times before the judge understood. Turning to his wife, he shook his head and muttered: "This is a setup". The judge warned that they would all be evicted if they kept up their verbal tirade.

The prosecution says that the Britons arrived separately in Yemen and found their way to a mountain training camp run by Abu Hassan, the self-confessed leader of the Islamic Army of Aden who kidnapped 16 western tourists to force the release of these five Britons. The court was told how Hassan gave the Britons explosives and weapons, which they tried to smuggle in their hire car past a military checkpoint on the outskirts of Aden.

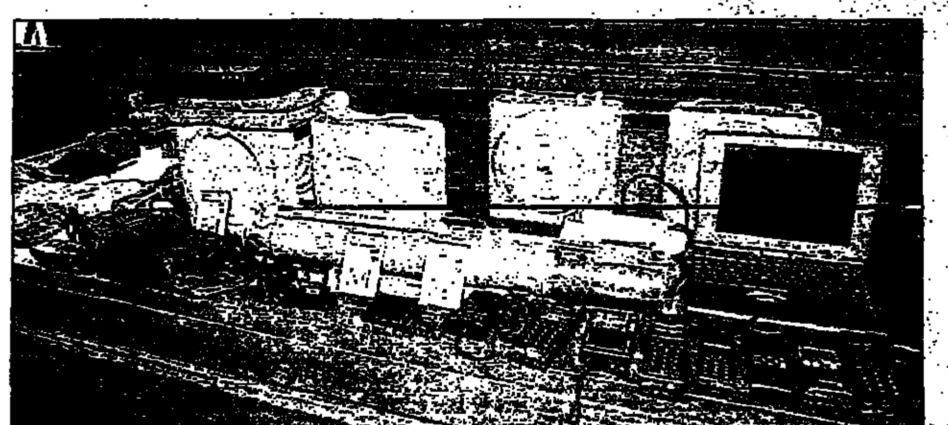
They allegedly abandoned the vehicle after crashing into a lorry and were picked up at two city centre hotels hours before they were due to bomb the British Consulate, the Anglican church and a nightclub that features belly dancers.

With tempers fraying on both sides, the judge adjourned the case until Saturday to allow the defence team more time with the five. He also said that the men could see their families but he refused to let them be examined by a doctor the relatives had brought from Britain.

☐ In London, the cleric Abu Hamza denied having anything to do with the latest three Britons arrested — including his teenage son — or with the kidnap of 16 westerners last month and the five Britons now on trial. He said: "I didn't know anything about the first group, why should I know about these?"

Malik Harhra, left, Mohsin Ghailan, Sarwad Ahmed, the Algerian Abdraham James and Shahid Butt display their bruises on the first day of their public trial

Cruel practice that is ancient and universal



Landmines, bazookas and TNT were among the equipment put on show at court

BY ALAN HAMILTON

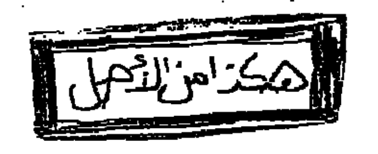
THE cruel practice of beating the soles of a victim's feet, known in the West as *bastinado* and in Arabic as *falaqa*, is ancient and universal among repressive regimes. Shakespeare, drawing on Holinshed's chronicles of medieval England, knew it. Touchstone the clown, listing some of the 150 ways he might kill in *As You Like It*, says to Audrey: "I will deal in poison with thee, or in bastinado, or in steel."

At Amnesty International, *bastinado* is regarded as a method of torture rather than a form of judicial punishment. Although it is widespread in the Arab world, traditionally administered by cane or knotted rope, there is no justification for it in Islamic law.

Last year's Amnesty annual report noted: "Torture is a criminal offence in Yemen but it has also been a widespread practice in detention centres, police stations and prisons throughout the country. It has frequently been reported as the main or contributory factor in cases of deaths in custody."

Amnesty quotes the Yemeni constitution, which states that anyone ordering or practising torture shall be punished. The country's penal code stipulates a maximum of ten years' jail for torturers. But the human rights group lists a catalogue of barbarity in the country since it was unified in 1990, icluding electric shocks, urinating on victims, burning with cigarettes, and sleep deprivation.

Yemeni authorities are also accused of subjecting prisoners to *Kentucky Farruj*, where prisoners are trussed like a chicken and suspended from a metal bar inserted between hands and knees, which are tied together.



Guilty trainer fights to keep beaten monkey

BY HELEN JOHNSTONE

MARY CHIPPERFIELD left court yesterday with her reputation as an animal trainer in tatters after she was found guilty of hitting a baby chimpanzee with a riding crop and kicking it. Her husband, Roger Cawley, was found guilty of cruelty to a sick elephant.

It was the first time a member of the Chipperfield circus family had been convicted of cruelty, despite many allegations by animal rights campaigners over the years.

As she left the court in Andover, Hampshire, flanked by police officers, Chipperfield smiled defiantly as supporters of the Animal Defenders charity, which had instigated the prosecution, shouted abuse.

Cawley, 64, a government zoo inspector, was convicted for applying a whip and stick to the elephant's body, which was covered in open sores. Both were acquitted of charges relating to the neglect of other animals, including camels and elephants. Shortly after the convictions, it was disclosed that Chipperfield, 61, planned to take the beaten chimpanzee, Trudi, back to her training quarters in Hampshire. Charles Gabb, who conducted the prosecution, immediately asked the stipendiary magistrate to pass ownership to the police to prevent the animal being removed from its new home at Monkey World in Dorset.

Trudi the chimpanzee at Monkey World in Dorset

He expressed concern that Chipperfield, who was found guilty of 12 charges of cruelty, had said on oath that she would do the same again.

Anne Rafferty, QC, for Chipperfield, who was charged under her married name, Mary Cawley, said her client could not be disqualified from having Trudi back as she did not own the animal: it was owned by Mary Chipperfield Promotions Ltd, of which Chipperfield was a director. Because the company had not been convicted, it could not be stopped in law from reclaiming the chimpanzee and returning it to Chipperfield's care at the farm.

Roger House, the stipendiary magistrate, adjourned sentence on the Cawleys until April 9, at Aldershot, to ascertain whether he could stop her taking Trudi back.

In finding the couple guilty of 13 charges out of 28, Mr House said that the Cawleys were not guilty of gratuitous cruelty. "It was not cruelty for the sake of it. It was a means to an end." However, any reasonable person would judge that they still cruelly inflicted unnecessary suffering.

Jan Creamer, a director of the London-based Animal Defenders, said after the case that she was pleased the couple had been convicted but disappointed that Trudi might have to go back. "It is the first prosecution of a Chipperfield," she said. "It's a start."

The circus dynasty, which goes back seven generations, has been criticised for years. But it was not until activists from Animal Defenders infiltrated Mary Chipperfield's training quarters near Stockbridge, and produced hours of video evidence, that a successful prosecution was brought. Chipperfield and her husband had moved to Stockbridge, and semi-retirement, in 1993. There she concentrated on dealing, training only when asked specifically for help. Introduced to the ring by her famous father, Jimmy, when she was ten, she claimed she was being victimised by the campaigners and the media because of who she was.

Chipperfield leaving court yesterday to shouts of abuse from members of the charity Animal Defenders

Recruits 'forced to dance the conga naked'

BY SIMON DE BRUXELLES

TEENAGE soldiers were made to dance the conga naked as part of a barrack-room initiation, a court martial was told yesterday.

Three recruits were ordered from their beds in the middle of the night and forced to strip a few weeks into their basic training with the Royal Green Jackets. One of the alleged victims said: "I was scared and disgusted. We were jumping around and kicking our legs in the air."

The court was told that the initiation ceremony was directed by Riflemen Jason Puzey, 27, and Mark Dacey, 22, at the infantry regiment's training camp on Salisbury Plain. First they were woken and their heads were shaved. Hours later they were roused again and ordered into an adjoining barrack room where they were made to strip and dance the conga in front of laughing soldiers from their unit.

One recruit was so disturbed by the experience that he fled from the barracks and was too scared to return for an hour. He said that he had feared for his safety when his head was shaved. "I have been trying to forget it," he said.

Rifleman Puzey and Rifleman Dacey, who serve with the regiment's 1st Battalion based at Bulford, Wiltshire, are accused of ten charges of conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline.

The pair face one joint charge of conduct of an indecent kind for rubbing a stick across the chest and inner thighs of a young soldier.

The court martial continues.

Globe director says sorry for stealing role of Cleopatra

BY DALYA ALBERGE

MARK RYLANCE, who is to play Cleopatra this summer in one of three new Shakespeare productions at the Globe with all-male casts, apologised yesterday for depriving actresses of their roles.

The theatre's artistic director pointed out that female roles were taken by men and boys in Shakespeare's time; the Globe collaborates with scholars to recreate as accurately as possible the way they were originally staged. He added that playing Cleopatra would present him with "a challenge".

Rylance, 39, is still working on just how to play the part but his performance will depend on speech, gracefulness, "and the ability of the audience to imagine". Impressed by Fiona Shaw's Richard II, he is also exploring whether to redress the balance with an all-woman cast for other plays.

As well as *Antony and Cleopatra*, the other all-male Shakespeare productions in the new season — May 13 to September 26 — are *Julius Caesar*, for which the Globe is exploring the "vexed question" of whether it would have been staged in Roman or Elizabethan costume; and *The Comedy of Errors*.

They are still casting. Rylance has yet to find his Antony. "I hope to find a consenting adult over the age of 16," he joked.

Rylance said that drama was a "collaborative exercise" and that "directors in the modern form have too much responsibility". The Globe will be sharing out those tasks, appointing a Master of Plays and a Master of Verse to take charge of "developing our eloquence".

Discussing the success of previous seasons — with 98 per cent capacity for *The Merchant of Venice* and 76 per cent for *As You Like It* — he spoke of how the audiences "teach you so much about a role ... rejecting what doesn't work".

While he spoke Henry V's lines last summer, a voice from the audience bellowed out: "Get on with it!"

"They were right," Rylance observed yesterday, "though I didn't relish it at the time."

Irvine surrenders to 'no win, no fee' divorce critics

BY FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Lord Chancellor has agreed to withdraw his plans for "no win, no fee" arrangements for divorcing couples who are fighting over property or money.

Lord Irvine of Lairg has bowed to the concerns of the Law Society and family lawyers, which said that such arrangements would undermine government policy to promote amicable divorce settlements.

The concession is the latest of several by the Lord Chancellor during the passage of his flagship Access to Justice Bill through the House of Lords.

Michael Mathews, president of the Law Society, said: "Conditional fee [no win, no fee] arrangements are totally unsuitable for divorce cases. The Lord Chancellor has sensibly reversed a government policy that would have led to increased acrimony and unnecessary legal battles in divorce cases."

He said that the Lord Chancellor had also conceded that not all disputes involving money and property could be funded through "no win, no fee" arrangements.

Despite the change of heart, which was also urged by the Solicitors' Family Law Association, Lord Irvine is standing firm on the proposed withdrawal of legal aid for all personal injury claims. This would leave conditional fees as the only source of funding for most people with accident claims, the Law Society said.

Mr Mathews said he hoped that the Lord Chancellor would listen as carefully to concerns about conditional fees in personal injury cases as he had the issue of conditional fees and divorce.

Lord Irvine has acted swiftly to defuse opposition to his Bill, which paves the way for an overhaul of the legal system. He has surprised his critics by acceding to a series of demands for his powers to be curbed and for stronger safeguards to be written into the Bill for the running of the proposed Community Legal Service and Criminal Defence Service which are to replace the £1.6 billion legal aid scheme.

The concessions are likely to ensure a swift passage of the Bill through Parliament.

As well as scrapping legal aid and setting up the two new services, the Bill lays the basis for publicly funded legal services to be provided through a system of contracts.

☐ Couples seeking a divorce will be able to find specialist legal help more easily under a scheme launched today by the Law Society. It is to publish a list of 4,000 solicitors who have a track record in family law and are committed to encouraging couples to resolve matrimonial disputes peacefully.

In 1997, 164,000 people filed for divorce. Most had had no previous contact with a solicitor and were unaware that they usually specialise in particular areas of law.

Ted Hills: ordered to change at airport

Holiday boy was dressed to distress

A BOY aged 10 was arrested by Barbados airport officials after arriving for a holiday wearing camouflage clothing.

Ted Hills's outfit, bought from Marks & Spencer, broke a Barbadian law that makes it illegal for all but the island's armed forces to wear camouflage kit.

His mother, Pat, said: "We got to customs and an airport police officer took us off to a room and told Ted to strip off. I told them he was not a terrorist and that he was only 10, but they said it was an offence to wear camouflage clothes on the island. Ted is soldier mad so I'm just glad that he didn't have his toy gun with him."

The family, from Heavily, Manchester, were allowed to continue their holiday after the boy had changed. "They let us keep the camouflage stuff as long as we promised not to take them out of the suitcase for the rest of the holiday," his mother said.

A spokesman for the Barbados tourist authority said: "It is against the law for anyone to wear camouflage clothes unless they are in the Barbados Defence Force. Tour operators should know that and inform holidaymakers beforehand."

School music gets £180m change of tune

BY JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

A DECADE of decline in school music is set to end in many parts of England with the announcement yesterday of a £180 million initiative to train teachers and provide more instrumental tuition.

Free music lessons have disappeared from thousands of schools as local authorities and school governors diverted funding to other areas. Research suggests that £10 million a year has been lost, with the proportion of subsidised lessons dropping from 70 per cent to 40 per cent since 1993.

David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, has announced his intention to ring-fence the government money allocated for school music. A joint initiative with the Culture Department will put another £150 million into school budgets over the next three years and add £30 million already committed to the new Youth Music Trust.

The trust, which has Sir Simon Rattle and Sir Elton John among its trustees, will make instruments available to children and help to fund after-school activities. Its funding will come from the National Lottery. Local authorities that have preserved their music services will bid for a total of £30 million a year on top of their current music budgets. Others will have to find matching funding to gain access to £20 million a year to re-establish subsidised tuition.

Mr Blunkett said: "Years of underfunding have left some children without access to musical instruments or the tuition they desperately need to develop their talents."

Head teachers and music bodies welcomed the initiative but gave warning of potential problems with its implementation. Some authorities that formed trusts to preserve central music services complained that they would now be penalised.

Michael Wearne, who chairs the Federation of Music Services, said there was also a danger that hard-pressed local authorities would use the new money to replace, rather than increase, current spending. "It's a bit like filling the bath from one end and leaving the plughole open at the other. We will have to exert moral pressure to ensure that the money gets through because this is a wonderful opportunity."

Women retract claims of MP's election fraud

Witnesses now not sure that man on doorstep was Mohammed Sarwar, reports Gillian Harris

TWO WOMEN who told police that Mohammed Sarwar had urged them to falsify their electoral registration forms withdrew their allegations yesterday as they faced the Labour MP in court.

On the second day of Mr Sarwar's trial at the High Court in Edinburgh, Shadia Hussain, 33, and Shamin Ahmad, 30, agreed that they had given statements to the police identifying the man who called at their homes as the MP for Glasgow Govan.

But yesterday they said they were less sure. Mrs Hussain, who described the man as a bald, smartly dressed, middle-aged Asian, told Duncan Menzies, QC, for the Crown, that she may have "jumped to conclusions". Mrs Ahmad said she was depressed and confused at the time, having had a miscarriage. Both women asked for their current addresses not to be divulged when they gave evidence.

Mr Sarwar, 46, Britain's first Muslim MP, denies four charges of electoral fraud and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. He is accused of inducing Mrs Hussain and Mrs Ahmad to make false statements by adding their names to the voting register in his Govan constituency. He is also accused of attempting to pervert the course of justice by inducing a rival candidate, Badar Islam, to make a false statement about two other candidates for a £5,000 payment.

Mrs Hussain told the court that she filled in the registration form on her doorstep while a man held it on a clipboard. When the man asked how long she had been living at her address she said she moved there in November 1996.

"The gentleman said: 'Have you stayed in the area?' I stated that I lived across the road since August. He said: 'You were living in the area?' I said, yes. 'If you stayed in the area just put down August 1996.' I just put in August 1996," Mrs Hussain said.

The court was told that Mrs Hussain had told the police in a witness statement that the man who came to her house was Mr Sarwar. Her statement said that she claimed that as he was leaving Mr Sarwar had told her to "make sure I voted for him".

Yesterday she told the court: "At that time I thought myself it was true." Mrs Hussain agreed that an article in *The Scotsman* reported her as saying the caller was Mr Sarwar. But she added that she had no chance to raise her subsequent doubts with police as they did not contact her for months.

Mrs Ahmad told the court that two men sporting Labour rosettes called at her home early in 1997 to check on voter registration. She filled in a form for herself and one for her husband, entering the date they moved into the house as November 11, 1996.

Studying the same form yesterday Mrs Ahmad agreed that the number 11 had been changed by a different hand to a 4 to make it look as though the couple had moved in April.

Her statement to police said: "I completed these forms in Councillor Sarwar's presence. I would recognise Mr Sarwar again." Yesterday she said she was no longer sure. "All I can say is I was quite badly distressed after the miscarriage."

The trial continues today.

At home on the range: Chris Brocklesby, 17, from Llanelli, who was declared world-line dancing champion in Texas

Valleys cowboy dances to victory

By Simon de Bruxelles

A TEENAGER from South Wales has stomped his way to victory in the world line-dancing championships, defeating America's leading Country and Western dancers on their home ground.

Accompanied by his mother, Lynda, Chris Brocklesby, 17, travelled from Llanelli — where he is studying the performing arts at college — to Texas to compete against hundreds of championship-winning line-dancers. The locals may have been born with Country rhythms in their blood but it was Chris's routines that impressed the judges and helped him to outhoof them all.

The teenager, who had won heats in Scotland, Germany and The Netherlands, said yesterday: "I still can't believe it. When the judges said I'd won I was so excited I started running around the dance floor. I'd worked hard for it but it was a real surprise.

"Most of the Americans had never heard of Wales so they were pretty shocked when this lad from the valleys came over and won the contest."

Chris took up line-dancing after a visit to a Country and Western club with his parents seven years ago. Soon he was joining weekly classes and entering junior contests. He practised for hours in front of a mirror in his bedroom and built a tiny wooden practice stage next to his bed. His father, Ray, also a line-dancing enthusiast, encouraged him to enter the world championships, organised by the United Country and Western Dance Council, in which 210 dancers from around the world participated, including one from Saudi Arabia. The Welsh cowboy wore a stetson, tassled cowboy shirt, jeans and black boots for the contest. After his victory, Chris taught a class at the Silver Saddle Club in Chicago.

He said: "Some old schoolfriends have a bit of fun at my expense but I tell them they should give line-dancing a try. When they do, most of them enjoy it. Line-dancing has taken me around the world and some of my best friends are line-dancers who think it's a pretty cool thing to do."

Detection rates fall despite extra cost

By Stewart Tendler
Crime Correspondent

POLICING costs have risen to £115 a year for every man, woman and child in England and Wales, but the number of crimes solved by each officer is falling.

In its latest survey of police performance, the Audit Commission says chief constables should explain why there are wide variations between forces. The gap between the best and worst in clearing up crime is continuing to grow, even though some forces performing badly are increasing their spending. The commission says: "The police service is spending more per head each year but there is still no direct correlation between increased spending and improved performance at the level of individual forces."

The commission also asks why chief constables cannot agree national standards for answering 999 calls and responding to them.

It found that since 1994-95, the number of crimes solved by each officer had dropped from 9.3 to 9.2 in 1997-98. At the same time, recorded crime per 1,000 population has fallen by 15 per cent, the number of officers on duty has not changed and the cost per head has gone up by £7.

Paul Vevers, who prepared the study, named a group of poor performers as Northumbria, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Durham and West Mercia.

Viagra youths risk all for a one-night stand

By Ian Murray
Medical Correspondent

YOUNG men who take the anti-impotence pill Viagra when they do not need it risk losing the virility they are trying to enhance, a leading consultant has claimed.

The drug has been licensed for five months and is meant to be prescribed only to men who suffer from erectile dysfunction, a condition which affects one in ten, most of them middle-aged or elderly.

However, Viagra has been available on the Internet for months and illicit suppliers have been offering it for sale in clubs and discos, where it is nicknamed Sextacy. Young men have been buying it in the hope that it will improve their sexual performance.

According to Roger Kirby, a consultant urologist at St George's Hospital, south London, young men taking the drug are putting themselves at serious risk of becoming impotent. If they take it with a "recreational" drug they also run the risk of a heart attack or stroke.

Mr Kirby says the danger is that, among some normal young men, Viagra causes priapism, a persistent and painful erection that can last for up to 12 hours. This in turn cuts off the blood supply to the smooth muscle which facilitates the erection process. Once the muscle is damaged in this way it becomes impossible for the young man to have a normal erection again.

The other, life-threatening danger is that sildenafil - the active ingredient of Viagra - combines with some drugs to cause a sudden fall in blood pressure and thus precipitates a heart attack or stroke.

"Poppers", one of the most widely used recreational drugs, contains amyl nitrate, which reacts in this way with sildenafil and becomes extremely dangerous.

Writing in *Student BMJ*, Mr Kirby says that taking Viagra for recreational purposes must be discouraged. There is no evidence that the drug does improve the performance of young men who do not suffer from erectile dysfunction while the hazards to them of taking it are great.

SEX DRINK HALTED

The British launch of a new drink for lovers under the name Viagrene was blocked by the High Court yesterday after objections from Pfizer, manufacturer of Viagra. Viagrene, already on sale in Finland and Sweden, is promoted as a soft drink containing an aphrodisiac. Mr Justice Parker temporarily banned Eurofood-Link from marketing it in Britain pending a full hearing.

Scientists 'are losing war on superbugs'

By Anjana Ahuja

SCIENTISTS are losing the war against superbugs, an Oxford scientist said last night. New forms of highly evolved bacteria that have begun to appear in British hospitals can defy every known antibiotic.

Martin Westwell delivered the stark warning in the first of a new series of Royal Institution lectures, sponsored by *The Times*. The *Scientists for the New Century* lecture series has been established to promote the work of young scientists such as Dr Westwell, a 27-year-old Cambridge-trained chemist, who are at the frontline of research but rarely have the opportunity to explain their work to the public.

Dr Westwell explained that current strains of bacteria had evolved chemical tricks to outwit even the most powerful drugs. Vancomycin, often called the "antibiotic of last resort", was now powerless against some of the nastiest bugs.

As a result, he said, hospitals were having to contain, rather than combat, infections. It is possible that the infections could creep into smaller hospitals and nursing homes with less vigilant controls, and from there find their way into the general community. Such a scenario, Dr Westwell said, would be a public health disaster and might cripple the NHS.

If any new drug does prove effective, scientists will still have to keep searching. Bacteria typically evolve resistance to any drug within about four years of its introduction.

Police investigate more 'backdoor euthanasia'

The BMA tells **Michael Horsnell** that some hospital doctors may be acting outside the law

FRESH allegations of "backdoor euthanasia" in Britain's hospitals are being investigated by police and health officials.

Inquiries have been launched into at least six deaths since *The Times* disclosed earlier this month that some doctors caring for elderly patients were "giving nature a helping hand". They were said to be withholding intravenous drips from dehydrated patients, often under sedation, and allowing them to die.

In several of the new allegations, bereaved relatives maintain that the patients were not terminally ill; four involve hospitals already named by *The Times*.

The latest claims take the number of known cases referred to detectives, health authorities and hospitals to nearly 60. Most involve individual cases but an investigation in Derby is looking into the deaths of 40 patients with dementia on a psychogeriatric ward at the Kingsway Hospital. Three nurses have been suspended. The police file is expected to be sent to the Crown Prosecution Service in the summer after an inquiry that was begun in November 1997, when junior nurses complained that food and water were being withdrawn from senile patients.

A number of relatives say that hospitals have made it clear that if they want to pursue a complaint, the coroner must be informed, which necessitates a distressing post mortem examination of the body and a delay in funeral arrangements. At their most vulnerable moment, they feel pressured into agreeing to death certificates that commonly deem death to be due to the underlying pathology, such as cancer or stroke, rather than dehydration.

As relatives' complaints about backdoor "mercy killing" increase, the British Medical Association is carrying out a huge consultation exercise on withholding and withdrawing fluids from patients in order to establish firm guidelines. Michael Wilks, chairman of the BMA's ethics committee, said that the response suggested that patients with dementia and those who had had serious strokes were among patients not terminally ill who had had artificial hydration withdrawn.

The House of Lords has stated that cases of persistent vegetative state (pvs), such as that of Tony Bland, the Hillsborough stadium disaster victim, must be referred to the courts. But in other non-pvs cases, doctors are operating in a grey ethical area in which they are allowed to exercise their clinical judgment and act in what they believe to be the patient's best interests.

Dr Wilks said: "There may be cases where best interest judgments and full clinical assessments have not been adequate."

He advised doctors that decisions about withdrawing nutrition and hydration from patients who were not dying should be taken "only with great care and with legal advice".

Two of the fresh cases examined by *The Times* were at St Peter's Hospital in Chertsey, Surrey, where one disturbing case is already under consideration by the Crown Prosecution Service after an inquiry by detectives.

That case involves an 81-year-old woman, admitted for treatment for constipation and a urinary infection, whose condition deteriorated from dehydration until her death six days later in May 1997.

Dr Wilks said: "It appears to us that the law is so unclear that doctors would be well advised to have recourse to the courts before they withdraw hydration. I am speaking of patients with, say, advanced Alzheimer's or those who have had serious strokes. We feel doctors withholding nutrition or hydration are outside the law even though their intentions were no doubt made in the best interest of the patient as they saw it."

Grieving families seek answers

One of the fresh cases at St Peter's Hospital, Chertsey, Surrey, involves the deaths of James Rowe, 81, a retired engineer, and his wife Doreen, 83, who died there two years apart. Their daughters, both nurses, are complaining about their treatment. Mrs Rowe, a mother of five, was put on a nasal-gastric tube but kept pulling it out and it was not replaced. During her first week in hospital her daughters had good contact with staff but, a week before she died, both sisters found staff suddenly distant. The two sisters pleaded in vain with them to replace the drip and, three days later, Mrs Rowe died. Her husband died from pneumonia two years later, on December 19, 1994. James Rowe was admitted to St Peter's after a neighbour found him distressed at home. A drip was found to have missed the vein and was not replaced. Three days later he had a fatal heart attack. Pat Tayler, one of his daughters, said: "We asked why he couldn't have a drip but nobody could give us an answer. He died thirsty. The whole thing was a nightmare." Both cases have been reported to police. A spokesman for the hospital said the incidents would be investigated.

Lilian Cook, 88, suffered a fall at home on May 13 1998, and was visited by a doctor. Her daughter, Valerie Buckle, arrived to care for her and during the day Mrs Cook had an omelette and six cups of tea.

When, however, Mrs Buckle realised that her mother's left arm was floppy, she again called the doctor and Mrs Cook was admitted to Eastbourne District General Hospital. She was found to have suffered a mild stroke that affected movement of the arm.

The next day Mrs Buckle discovered a sign saying "nil by mouth" above her mother's bed. About 36 hours after admission Mrs Cook, who remained conscious during her illness, was telling her daughter, "I'm gasping for something to drink, my mouth is so dry." Nursing staff said she was not allowed anything until she saw a doctor because a stroke may affect the ability to swallow.

Increasingly concerned by the lack of fluids, Mrs Buckle bought a feeding cup from a pharmacy and her mother drank a weak solution of orange juice unaided. When Mrs Buckle returned the next day, the cup had been removed and she was told not to disobey the nil by mouth regime. Still no doctor had seen her mother, she says.

Three days after admission Mrs Cook was given an intravenous drip but it caused swelling in her arm. The drip was removed and never replaced. Still complaining of thirst, Mrs Cook died three days later on May 19.

The family could not bear the thought of a post-mortem examination, and the cause of death was given as a stroke.

Mrs Buckle, 65, says: "Maybe my mother would have died anyway but the hospital could have made her last few days a little more comfortable." She has asked the police to investigate. No comment was available from the hospital.

Lindsay Griffiths with her husband Karl MacInnes. She is suing the Army for defamation

Army sued for Aids scare

BY PAUL WILKINSON

A WOMAN is to sue the Army after she was named as an Aids threat to 7,000 soldiers on a military base.

Lindsay Griffiths, 20, claims that she was harassed and victimised after senior army officers issued a public warning to troops at Catterick garrison, in North Yorkshire, that two local women were carrying the virus. Personnel were urged to seek medical advice and undergo HIV tests.

Although the Army never named the women, gossip on the base pointed the finger at Ms Griffiths and a friend who lived in the village of Colburn, close to Catterick. Neighbours claimed they had held drunken sex parties at the friend's council flat with squaddies queueing to get in.

The two women, who were both aged 19 at the time, strenuously denied the allegations and rumours. When army officials refused to confirm or deny if Ms Griffiths was one of the women whom soldiers were being warned about, she took an HIV test. The result was negative.

Yesterday John McArdle, her solicitor, said that Cherie Booth would be heading the legal team and that Ms Booth was a very able Queen's Counsel. "She is synonymous with protecting individual rights and we are pleased to have her on our side representing Lindsay when we sue for damages for defamation."

Mr McArdle said a writ had been served on the MoD this week. The MoD had not yet indicated whether it would contest the claim. Yesterday the MoD refused to comment.

Ms Griffiths subsequently married Karl MacInnes, 23, a soldier with the 1st Battalion The Highlanders, based at Catterick, who had stood by her during the controversy.

Country set turn green with envy

Home fantasies are shifting further from the towns, says **Rachel Kelly**

THE dream of the moneyed country lover is shifting back to the green acres and privacy of the real countryside. But once there, they have no wish to farm nor to become the local squire.

This is because their dream lifestyle is now to work from home in a four-bedroom, three-reception Georgian house set in a couple of acres in the West Country, costing up to £500,000, with accommodation for live-in staff. And an Aga cooker, of course.

The glimpse into the fantasies at the higher end of the house market is provided by a survey by *Country Life* magazine, whose house adverts are the stuff of envy among many townies.

Their 1970s ideal was an Edwardian house in Surrey. In the 1980s, it was a small Palladian mansion in Wiltshire. A decade on, the dream has pushed into Somerset, Devon and East Anglia. One reason is that the country property market is now driven by people buying homes for their families, not their retirement, as the telecommunications revolution mean that careers such as marketing and PR can be pursued from home.

Buyers want the proper countyside as opposed to leafy suburbia, privacy as opposed to being high-profile "squire of the manor" and staff accommodation as homes become more remote from cities.

The survey tracked 750 houses advertised in 1998 and compared them with an equivalent sample advertised in 1980 and 1990. The number of such high-profile advertisements is taken to demonstrate an awareness of what people really want. *Country Life*'s deputy editor Michael Hall said: "This survey draws its authority from the fact that the advertisements reflect the way ideals and aspirations have evolved since the 1970s, from the dawn of the country house boom through the burgeoning confidence of the property market in the Thatcher decade, to an arguably more discreet and sophisticated market today."

The desire for real countryside was reflected in the gradual decline in the number of houses advertised from the commuter belts of Surrey, Berkshire and Kent. By 1990 this figure had declined to 21 per cent and by 1998, it had gone down to 15.5 per cent. The Cotswolds was the dream location in the 1980s: advertising in Gloucestershire more than doubled between 1980 and 1990, in part because of the Prince of Wales's home in Highgrove and the Princess Royal's home at Gatcombe.

A decade on, the push continues west and east. Just 5 per cent of advertisements came from East Anglia in 1980, compared with 7 per cent in 1990 and 16 per cent in 1998. The number of cottages declined, and so has the number of farms (3 per cent compared with 36 per cent in 1990) because of the unprofitability of farming. Land is no longer a great draw, with 4.5 per cent of houses having more than ten acres in 1998, compared with 28 per cent in 1990. In contrast with the 1980s, people wish for a few modest acres, not an estate. Land is for privacy, not display. "Houses are now homes and not status symbols," Mr Hall said.

The survey also noted a sharp rise in the number of post-war houses being advertised, suggesting that people who cannot find or are unable to afford a historic house are looking more sypathetically at houses of this period, and greater accuracy in the use of historical styles such as Jacobean Queen Anne or Regency.

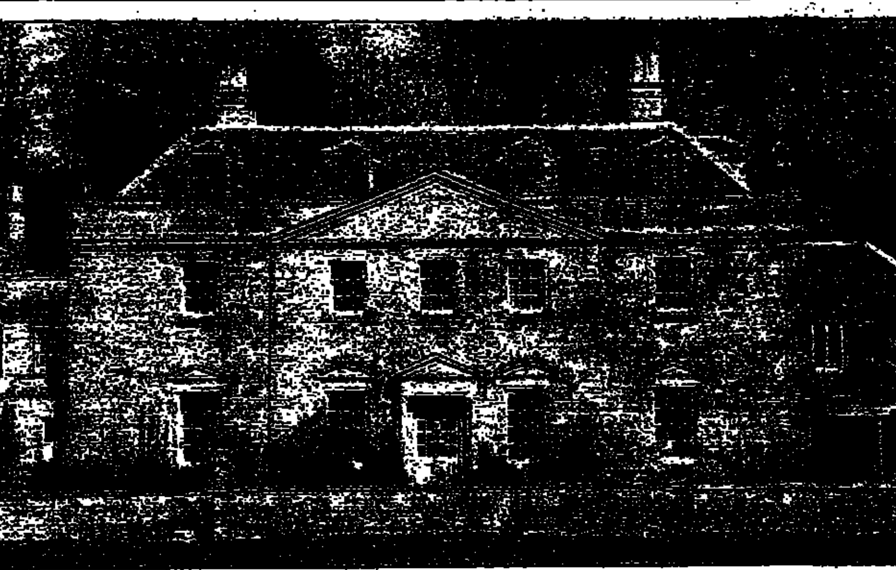
There is a decline in the number of homes for sale which are advertised as unmodernised. "Buyers no longer want the bother of doing up these houses," said Mr Hall. There has been a steep fall in the number of chapels, barns and windmills, a reflection of tighter planning restrictions which has made it difficult to do up such homes, and a move away from the 1980s passion for doing up wrecks.

Kitchens have become a key point, now featured as prominently as reception rooms. In particular, owners are keen to mention it if they have an Aga — four per cent of advertisements featured one. Riding remains the most popular activity drawing people to the countryside, but there is an increasing desire for more sedentary comforts: houses are more likely to have saunas than billiard rooms.

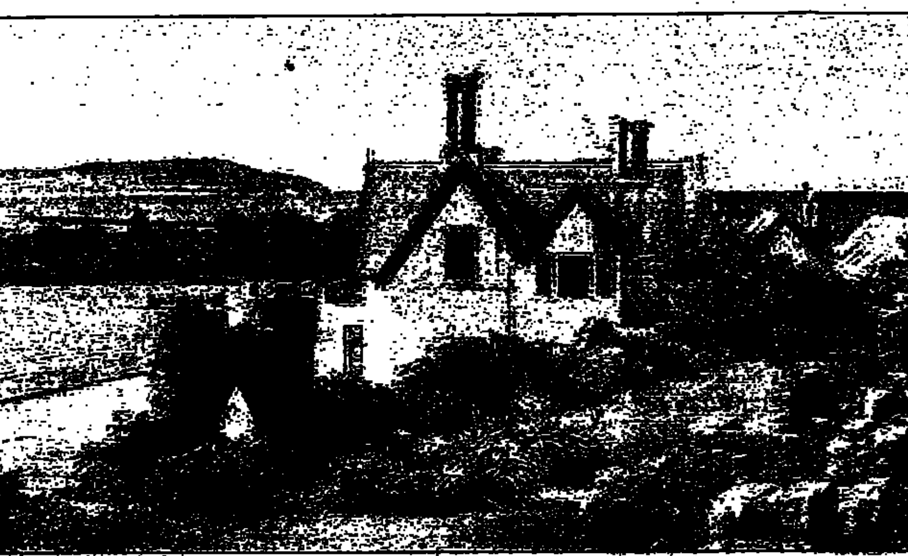
William Gething, from the buyers agent Property Vision, said: "Privacy is at a premium. People are prepared to travel further to work and many are now working from home."

DEB ON THE WEB

Is this the face to launch a thousand years? Davina Duckworth-Chad, 19, kicks off a competition to find a millennium girl with beauty and brains on *Country Life's* new website — www.countrylife.co.uk



Dream home of the Nineties: a Georgian mansion in the West Country



Dream home of the Eighties: a Palladian mansion, ideally in Wiltshire

Dream home of the Seventies: an Edwardian house, preferably in Surrey

NEWS IN BRIEF

3,000 to leave jails with tags

Three thousand offenders would be released early from prison by Easter under the Government's new electronic tagging scheme, prison officials forecast yesterday. Eventually an estimated 30,000 to 35,000 prisoners, sentenced for crimes ranging from theft to some violent crimes, could be freed every year. Martin Narey, director-general designate of the service, denied that the scheme was intended to reduce prison populations and said tagging would help prisoners to make an effective transition back to life in the community.

Butler accused

Bernard Flannery, 40, butler to the Prince of Wales at St James's Palace, has been charged with drink-driving following a collision at Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, moments after collecting a new £15,000 Ford Focus for the royal staff fleet.

Rector's appeal

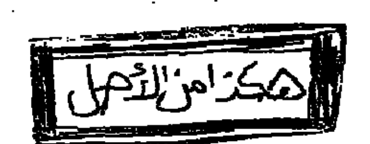
Clifford Williams, 50, who was defrocked by the Church in Wales in 1997 for "scandalous conduct" by having a six-year affair with a married parishioner, lost his appeal to the Church's Synod of Bishops against his expulson as Rector of Benllech, Anglesey.

Sinking funds

An 81-year-old artist sold his storyboards for the 1957 film *A Night to Remember*, about the *Titanic*, at three times their expected price. Robert Bell, from the Midlands, drew the pen and ink pictures for Pinewood Studios. They fetched £1,495 at a sale in London.

Football arson

The former head of then Division Three football club Doncaster Rovers was facing jail after he was found guilty of a plot to burn down the club's main stand. Ken Richardson was exposed when the former soldier he had recruited left a mobile phone at the scene.



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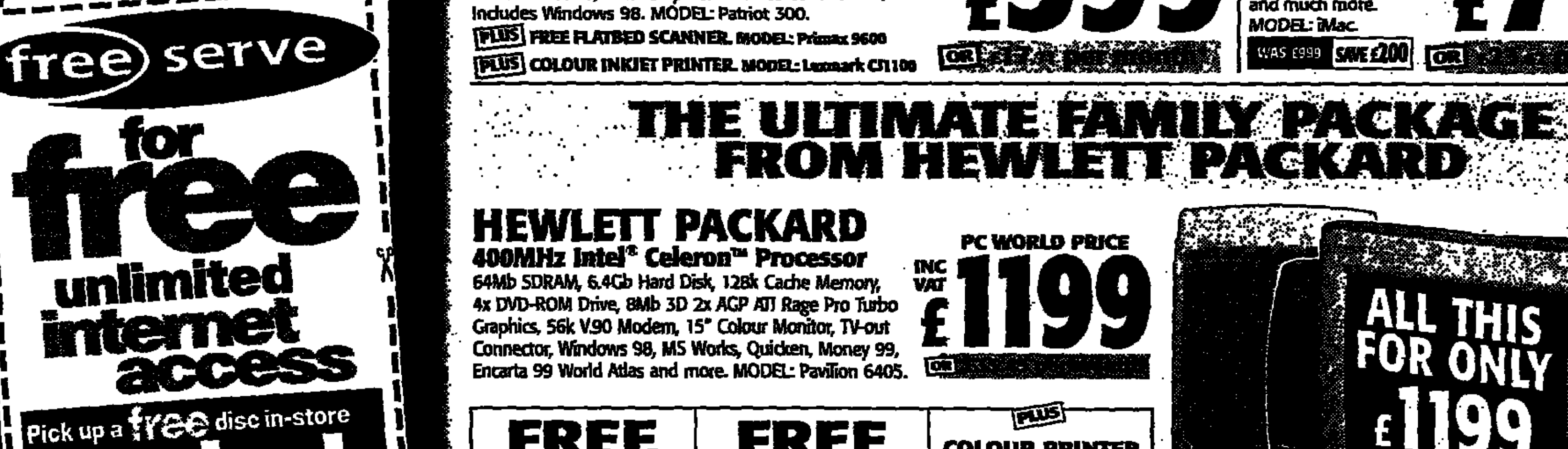

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Plough-to-plate food scrutiny will cost £120m

Farmers and shops fear levy will compromise agency's role, reports Michael Hornsby

A FLAT-RATE levy of £90 a year on nearly 500,000 food retail and catering premises was proposed by the Government yesterday to help to pay for a new food safety watchdog.

The levy was the most controversial element in a draft Bill for the establishment of a Food Standards Agency, which will monitor the safety of what Britain eat from plough to plate.

Retailers and farmers welcomed the principle of the agency but said that its independence would be undermined from the outset if it depended on food industry funding. Butchers, corner shops and other small businesses said it was unfair that they should be charged the same rate as supermarket chains and hotels.

Nick Brown, the Agriculture Minister, said that the levy proposals would be put out to consultation for two months and might be amended in the light of these discussions. "The food industry is being asked to fund the extra costs of setting up the agency, but most of the cost of protecting food safety will continue to be met from public funds," he said.

Mr Brown described the levy as modest, working out at £1.73 a week, roughly the cost of one prepared sandwich. Local authorities would be given the task of collecting the levy and would be able to use some of the money to finance food safety enforcement through local environmental health officers.

There are 515,000 registered restaurants, hotels, shops, caterers and other outlets selling food to the public. But 25,000 of these will be exempt from the levy. It will raise an estimated £40 million a year for the agency's start-up costs and part of its £120 million annual budget, with the rest coming from general taxation. The levy will be reviewed after three years.

Mr Brown said that the agency would not involve extra public expenditure because the money would come out of the £250 million already being spent on food safety every year through such bodies as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Department of Health. He hoped the Bill could become law by this autumn and the agency working by early next year.

The new body will have the power to advise ministers, recommend policy changes and draft some legislation. It will be free to make public its advice to ministers.

The agency will be headed by a chairman and about 12 independent members. It will be accountable to Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, and will have 500 staff transferred from Agriculture and Health.

The agency will share with the Health Department the task of advising the public on diet and nutrition and will be consulted on the health aspects of genetically-modified crops. One of its main functions will be to monitor the work of local authorities.

Graham Bidston of the National Federation of Meat and Food Traders, representing 3,000 independent butchers, said: "We support the agency in principle, but anything that is funded by the industry will not be credible in the eyes of the public."

George Bridges, page 22
Leading article, page 23

A sandwich shop in Wandsworth, southwest London. Small food businesses say they will have to recoup the government levy by increasing prices

Corner shops protest at 'poll tax'

By Michael Hornsby

EASIER administration appears to be the reason why the Government has chosen a flat-rate levy of £90 a year on food premises to pay for its new Food Standards Agency. Critics say the method is unfair, like the poll tax which the Tories tried to levy on property.

Harrods or a Tesco superstore will pay the same as a village store, pub, corner shop or mobile hot dog vendor. Only very small food retailers, such as newsagents, will be exempt. Asked yesterday how this could be reasonable, Nick Brown, the Agriculture Minister, replied: "Because the level of risk would be the same."

Ministry officials said that it was often in the small businesses where hygiene problems arose, rather than in superstores with sophisticated storage and chillers. As the levy is less than £2 per premises per week, it should be bearable for most businesses and should not lead to higher prices, the ministry said.

In a consultation paper, the Government said a flat-rate levy was the "most efficient and cost-effective" method of raising money to fund the agency. Grading it according to turnover, floorspace or number of staff "would add considerably to the complexity of the scheme and the administrative burden on businesses and local authorities".

Typical of the owners of smaller food premises who object is Constantinou Mebetios, 62, who owns a café in Wandsworth, southwest London: "It's all right for the supermarkets, they make millions so they can afford it, but it will ruin my business. I will have to put up my prices and that will upset my customers."

The Government is proposing to exempt an estimated 25,000 shops, such as newsagents, which do not primarily sell food and deal only in wrapped confectionery, soft drinks and crisps. This will leave an estimated 490,000 premises to be charged, with the aim of raising £40 million in each of the first three years towards setting up and running the agency. It will have a budget of about £120 million a year.

Church and village halls used by voluntary or charitable organisations will be exempt, provided that no food except tea, sugar or similar dry products are stored there. Events such as Women's Institute lunches and village fetes will be spared, but schools and hospitals must pay.

Relentless rise over 20 years

By Michael Hornsby

FOOD poisoning has shown a relentless rise over the past 20 years, with about 100,000 cases now reported each year, of which up to 200 are fatal.

The causes are complex, but most experts believe that lifestyle changes have played a big part as more and more people eat out or rely on ready-made foods.

Official figures mainly cover food poisoning reported by doctors and confirmed by laboratory analysis. It is thought that as many as a million people may suffer each year from unreported food-borne infection leading to diarrhoea or upset stomachs.

Reported cases of food poisoning in England and Wales rose from 14,253 in 1982 to an estimated 93,990 last year. In Scotland they rose from 2,700 to 9,241, and in Northern Ireland from about 100 to 1,300.

Americans come clean on how to avoid tummy trouble

THERE is less food poisoning in the United States than Britain, even in urban areas. Therein lies the clue to the spread in this country.

Americans are extremely hygiene-conscious and would not dream of failing to wash their hands carefully after using the lavatory. Many outbreaks of food poisoning in Britain can be traced to the simple failure of a waiter or cook to scrub their hands well enough to eradicate any lurking organisms. Fingernails should be kept short.

At home, the refrigerator and cooking utensils are a common source of infection. Americans set a good example again. Their fridges are usually splendidly aseptic, with unopened tins and bottles gleaming beside well-wrapped food. In Britain, a raw bloody joint too often drips from a shelf onto food below.

There may be benefits from the economy-conscious, non-throwaway society but hygiene is not one of them. If food is to be kept, it should not be allowed to stand in a warm kitchen, breeding bacteria, for hours before it is refrigerated. Meat should be cooked through.

That may not prevent Creutzfeldt Jakob disease but it will offer protection from E. coli and a host of other less lethal organisms. Eating steak tartare is the Russian roulette of the dining room. The incidence of food poisoning continues to increase. Some cases are non-infectious and the result of a sensitivity to a food but that is comparatively rare. Attacks of diarrhoea and vomiting are more likely to follow a visit to a restaurant, or a public function, than eating at home.

Food poisoning may be caused by bacteria or viruses. The common causes of food-borne infections in this country are *salmonella*, *staphylococcus*, *campylobacter* and *clostridium perfringens*. There are also outbreaks of *listeria* and *E. coli 0157*, which is particularly dangerous in the very old and young.

The truth is that most food poisoning is a result of eating faeces, either human or animal. It may come from the dirty hands of the cook or waiter, or from a badly butchered and inadequately cleaned joint. The symptoms are well known: nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, headache, shivering and, if there has been too much fluid loss, collapse. Tests will usually confirm the diagnosis.

Most cases will clear up spontaneously but, if there is bleeding or a persistent temperature, antibiotic therapy will be helpful.

Dr Thomas Stuttaford

Tory MPs demand end to releases

Blair: stood firm in face of pressure

Commons debate: Mowlam rejects claims that rise in punishment beatings signals end to peace agreement

By James Landale and Philip Webster

TORY MPs yesterday demanded a halt to the further release of paramilitary prisoners until terrorist beatings, mutilations, and shootings ended in Northern Ireland.

Opening an opposition day debate, **Andrew Mackay**, the Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, said the attacks were increasing despite last year's Good Friday agreement.

He quoted statistics from the Families Against Intimidation and Terror, which recorded 158 acts of mutilations, beatings, intimidation and forced exiles this year alone. This compared to a total of 500 last year and 388 in 1997.

Mr Mackay attacked the "evil men" from both republican and loyalist groups who carried out the beatings.

"Those who are responsible for these evil, nauseating acts are the same people who signed the Good Friday agreement. The essential part of the agreement was the renunciation of violence in all its forms. It is absolutely clear that the ceasefire is not holding and violence is continuing apace."

He added: "These are not punishment beatings. For my constituents, that sounds like a modest extention of neighbourhood watch. These are mutilations, they are beatings, they are deliberate."

Mr Mackay rejected claims that the victims of attacks were often drug dealers and paedophiles.

"More often, they are not. It cannot be right in a democracy for any group to take it upon themselves to be the police, the judge and the jury and then the executioner."

MPs were debating a Tory motion condemning the attacks and calling for a halt to prisoner releases.

Mr Mackay said: "My judgment is that it is far more likely that the beatings will stop if the terrorist prisoners are no longer released."

He insisted that the Government, under the provisions of the Northern Ireland (Sentences) Act, was able to halt the releases without undermining the entire peace agreement.

The victims of the attacks were rarely from the middle-class parts of Northern Ireland. "This has been the poor bloody infantry who have been brushed under the carpet and ignored," he said.

> 'It is absolutely clear that the ceasefire is not holding'

Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, said that she shared Mr Mackay's disgust and added that the Government had done more than the previous administration in helping the victims of paramilitary beatings.

But she insisted that the Tories were wrong to call for an end to releases. "Punishment assaults, beatings, shootings and mutilations have been an unacceptable feature of life in Northern Ireland for far too long. Northern Ireland has suffered from a crisis of confidence. Groups have been committed to violence to achieve their ends. This crisis of confidence has to be addressed. And that is what the Good Friday agreement is designed to do.

"By creating structures, we will give the communities the confidence to say no — once and for all — to the mutilators and the vigilantes. The people of Northern Ireland are closer now to that than they have ever been. And that is what we risk losing if we go down the route suggested by the Tories."

She rejected the Tory claims that the beatings implied that the ceasefires had been broken. "I do not believe . . . that if I rewrote the agreement, unilaterally stopping one part — prisoner releases — that the process would stay intact."

Ms Mowlam said she could only act if she had firm evidence of paramilitary involvement in the attacks.

"If I judge that any group's ceasefire is at an end, then I will stop the releases. That is not my judgment at present."

David Trimble, the First Minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly, insisted that Ms Mowlam did not have to have evidence which was legally admissible in court before acting to halt releases. Ms Mowlam would have difficulty convincing anyone in Northern Ireland that she was not receiving intelligence indicating that paramilitary organisations were involved in acts of violence, he said.

The suggestion that the agreement would collapse if releases were stopped or slowed down would "chill the heart" of many people in the province. "That's quite an appalling state of affairs. Prisoner releases are part of the agreement, but they are part of the whole and that includes the end of violence."

> 'Prisoner releases are part of the Good Friday agreement'

He said that the Prime Minister's statement in the Commons yesterday implied that "terrorist organisations can re-write the agreement at will and that these sort of beatings and killings can go on with impunity".

He said the terrorists were testing Ms Mowlam's resolve. "So far you haven't shown any resolve or willingness to tackle this situation. If you continue to allow them to push you around, the challenge that is going to come up and face us all in a month or two's time will be more difficult."

Seamus Mallon, the Deputy First Minister, said that if the motion was passed, "how then would the Secretary of State solve the problems of these type of brutalities? What then?"

Ending prisoner releases would scupper the agreement, he said. If the deal was swapped for a political vacuum, "we would throw away the keys to our future, to our peace, we would throw the keys to the leaders of the paramilitary groups".

Harry Barnes (Lab, Derbyshire NE) urged the Government to slow down releases in protest, but added: "It would be a problem saying they should be stopped entirely because it would be interpreted by some people as breaching the Belfast agreement."

Michael Mates, the former Tory Northern Ireland Minister warned Ms Mowlam that as more prisoners were released, she was losing the last bargaining card to keep the agreement on track.

He said: "You are going to run out of options. All the prisoners will be out, not one bomb, not one bullet, not one gun will have been handed in. What are you going to do then?"

The Tory motion was defeated by 343 to 141, a majority of 202.

Hague: challenged Blair five times

Another shooting hours before Commons motion

By Martin Fletcher, Chief Ireland Correspondent

REPUBLICAN paramilitaries carried out Northern Ireland's twelfth "punishment shooting" of the year just hours before the Conservatives called for an end to the release of terrorist prisoners in yesterday's House of Commons debate.

The paramilitaries dragged a 20-year-old man into a back-garden off a cul-de-sac in a bleak and cheerless post-war housing estate in Andersonstown, West Belfast, late on Tuesday night. They made the man lie down in the mud and shot him through both hands and his left ankle.

No group admits carrying out the attack but it was obvious from the IRA graffiti on the surrounding walls who controls the estate. Near a grocery was written "Not a bullet, not an ounce" and "free all Andersonstown's PoWs".

The shooting was commonplace, but its timing was evidently designed to send a message of defiance.

THE BEATINGS

The shooting took place in the garden of two pensioners, Annie and Joseph Barr, whose back gate had been broken down in a recent storm.

"I heard this terrible noise. I didn't realise it was a shooting. I looked out and there was something in the garden. I thought it was a dog or something," said Mrs Barr.

"When I opened the door I said — what's happening, what's going on? This man just said 'can you call an ambulance?' While I was on the phone my husband went out and said 'he is going to bleed to death'. He brought him out a towel and gave him a drink of water. It was terrible. I have not got over it yet."

Neither Mrs Barr nor anyone else approached by *The Times* on the estate dared speculate on who might have been responsible, even when asked directly if it was the IRA. But all said that they believed the man must have done something to deserve being shot.

"My immediate reaction is: he must have done something," Mrs Barr said.

An elderly man who lived next door said: "I'm sure he's been up to no good. I don't agree with punishment attacks but something has to be done. The police don't bother."

A third man, walking home with his shopping, remarked: "They don't get it for nothing."

The shot man was stable in hospital yesterday. The attack brings to 39 the number of shootings and beatings carried out by Republican and loyalist paramilitaries this year despite the ceasefires, the commitment of the paramilitaries' political representatives to exclusively peaceful means, and Mo Mowlam's demand on Monday that the "barbaric" attacks be halted.

'I decided I would dedicate myself to peace, and I have done that irrespective of consequences — and there have been consequences'

The supergrass whose record told on him

By Audrey Magee
Ireland Correspondent

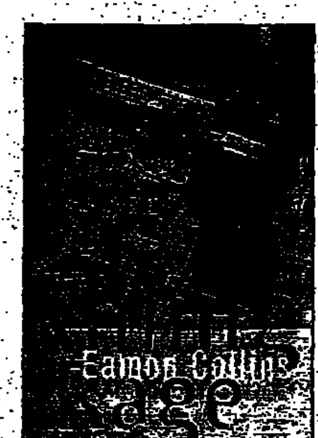
EAMON COLLINS died just as he lived for the last 13 years: alone and despised by all but his family and a few friends.

He was an informer who betrayed the IRA but escaped the usual punishment of a bullet in the back of the head and his corpse left booby-trapped south of the border. He survived to follow in the footsteps of Martin McGartland and write about the life in the IRA from the inside.

But unlike McGartland and other supergrasses, Collins refused to leave Northern Ireland. He insisted that the IRA had no right to force him into exile. Ironically, Collins had recently decided to leave Ulster. He, his wife Bernadette, and four children had been subjected to threats. The house he was renovating in Camlough, South Armagh, was burnt to the ground and graffiti telling him to get out of town was daubed across Newry.

Collins was loathed by the IRA. He claimed they tried to run him down in April 1997, leaving him unconscious, and said they petrol-bombed his car in July 1995.

The 44-year-old made the fatal mistake of turning against the IRA. He did not try to glamourise it but in *Killing Rage* described the gritty, cold realities of planning and executing policemen, soldiers and informers. Collins was an intelligence gatherer. He tracked policemen and soldiers as they dropped their children to school, shopped with their wives and went to Sunday service. He tells of murdering one elderly policeman who, sitting in a local pub, pleaded with the IRA: "No boys, not me".


Collin's book described the realities of IRA murders

THE MAN

He joined the IRA in the winter of 1978 while working for the British Government as a customs officer on the border. His first assignment was plotting to kill Ivan Toombs, a part-time major in the Ulster Defence Regiment who worked in Customs. Collins spotted a Friday morning routine in which Toombs treated colleagues to coffee and tea that provided the IRA gunmen with the perfect opportunity. "At last I have tied him down to one place, only momentarily, but long enough for the gunmen to get in, kill him, and get out again," he said.

In the wake of the killing Collins was "full of a heady mixture of anti-imperialism, anger, sympathy and self-importance". He craved the approval of the IRA. He assisted in the murders of at least 15 people. The terrorists relied on him heavily until he identified a Roman Catholic as an RUC detective. The IRA mistakenly murdered Sean McShane.

Collins was debriefed by the terrorists and exonerated. But they were less forgiving two years later when Collins was arrested after the killing of nine policemen in a mortar attack on Newry police station.

He cracked after five days of interrogation and named 50 IRA colleagues in South Armagh and south Down, 12 of whom were charged with serious terrorist charges, including six murders. But Collins retracted his statements and they were released. Collins was charged with five murders but released two years later when a judge decided his confessions were induced as "a result of inhuman and degrading treatment".

After his retraction Collins was promised a pardon from the IRA and felt betrayed when he was instead exiled.

Collins, short and with a stubborn streak, was adamant that the terrorists be seen as cold-blooded murderers and not as heroes. He said: "If peace prevails, in maybe ten or 15 years from now, people who carried out the most horrendous, merciless acts will have dirges written about them. History will be sanitised and they will be heroes, but I don't want any part of that. There was nothing heroic about this war."

Collins being taken into court in Banbridge after being arrested and charged with murder in 1985

ALAN LEWIS
Eamon Collins, the former IRA man found dead in Newry yesterday, was known to be a target for the terrorists

'He knew he was in danger'

By Martin Fletcher
Chief Ireland Correspondent

THE former IRA terrorist lived in the constant expectation that the organisation he disowned would return to assassinate him, his lawyer said last night.

"He said to me many times, whenever he was asked, that he was in danger. That was self-evident," Jason McCue said. "The one thing I don't think anyone can take away from him is his courage in standing up to the IRA."

Mr Collins received many threats, direct and indirect. In 1997 he was the target of a hit-and-run attack. Last year his father's empty house in South Armagh, was burnt days before he and his family were to move in. "He was very depressed after that," Mr McCue said.

Mr Collins had begun to turn against violence even before his trial in 1986, but the experience of his trial contributed greatly to his change of heart. He had been brought up to believe there was no justice for nationalists in the British courts — yet Mr Justice Higgins found that he had been subjected by police to degrading and inhuman treatments when he broke under interrogation. Mr Collins retracted his confession in court.

THE LAWYER

"That judge gave me justice . . . and I will never forget that man, and as I sat in the cell in that court I decided if he released me I would dedicate myself to peace, and I have done that irrespective of the consequences — and there have been consequences." After retracting his confession, Mr Collins was promised a pardon from the IRA.

Explaining last year why he had attacked the IRA so publicly in his book *Killing Rage* and on television, he said it was "because the IRA had made an agreement with me which they failed to honour and I felt that at some stage in my life I would tell the truth of that relationship . . . It was necessary for my children that they know what their father was and what their father's views were and what their father went through."

Asked why Mr Collins returned to live in a staunchly Republican estate and in such obvious danger, Mr McCue replied: "That's the million-dollar queston. It's an Irish thing to say: I am not going to give in to these people: this is my home, this is my land. He was also inextricably bound to his hometown and where he was brought up and the idea of leaving that town was very difficult for him." Nor did Mr Collins have much money with which to move his family.

Mr McCue accused Sinn Fein and IRA of grotesque hypocrisy. "They are asking unionists and victims to forgive terrorist prisoners yet they can't forgive their own. That's outrageous. On this one they have gone too far."

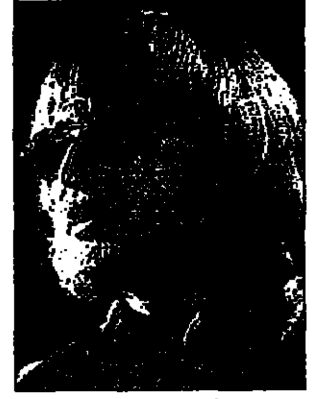
Men who live in fear of sudden revenge

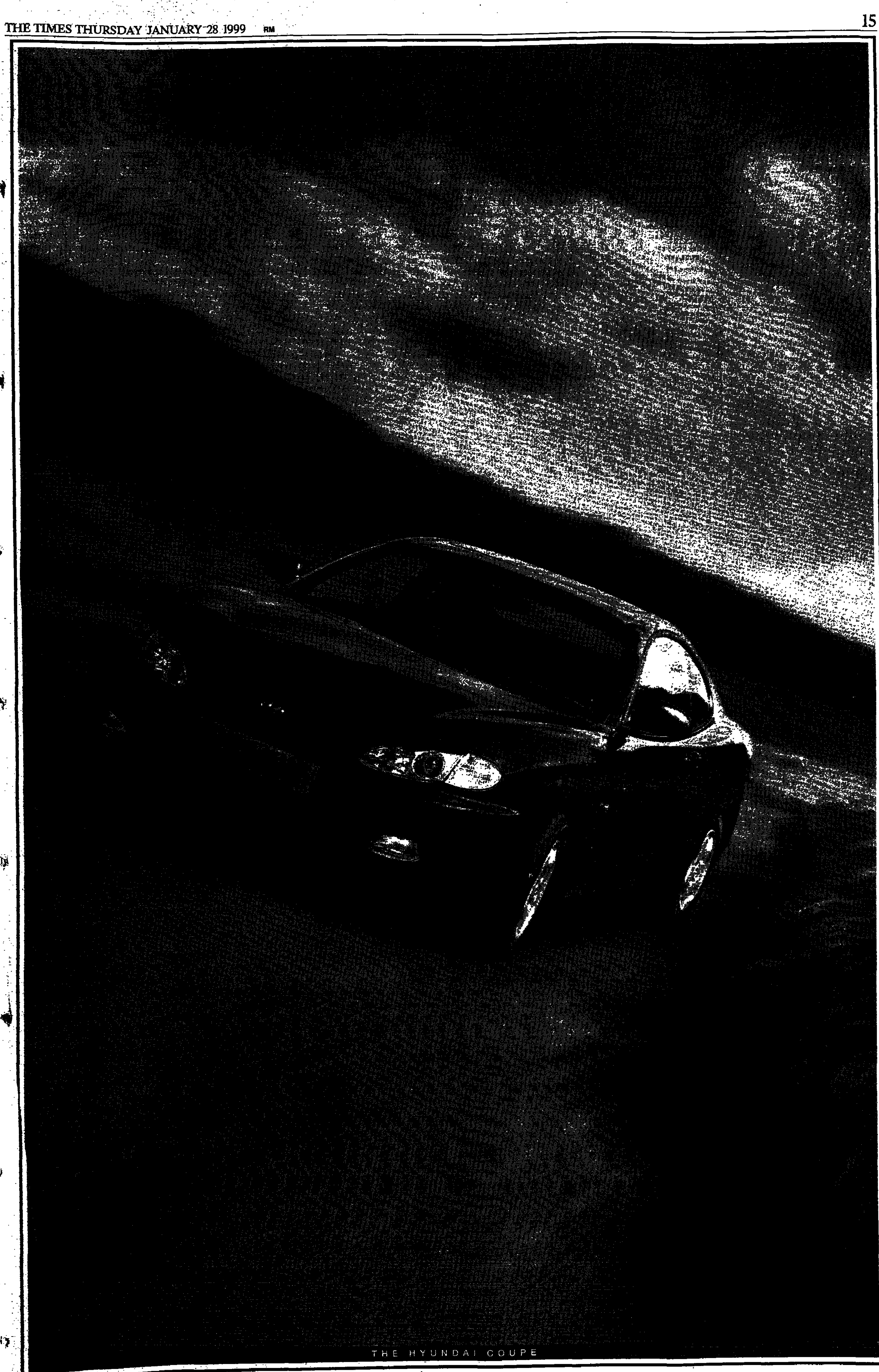
THE INFORMERS

Martin McGartland: first supergrass to write a book, *Fifty Dead Men Walking*, of his experiences in the IRA. From West Belfast he was recruited by the RUC Special Branch as an informer and subsequently joined the IRA's Belfast Brigade. Now living in hiding in the North of England, he claims to have saved at least 50 lives as "Agent Carol".

Raymond Gilmour: tells of his nine years as an undercover police agent in Londonderry in his book *Dead Ground*. He joined the Irish National Liberation Army at 16 but switched to the IRA. He now lives on the Continent although his family have returned to Northern Ireland.

Sean O'Callaghan: author of *The Informer*, and best known of the IRA informers. He joined the IRA at 15 and was sickened by the violence. From 1979 to 1988 he leaked information to security forces in the Irish Republic. He gave evidence against Thomas "Slab" Murphy last year in a libel case and is in hiding in England.


McGartland in disguise for a BBC documentary



★★★ Worth buying

car

arge

Fascist's rise to Olympic peak

Samaranch is proud of his Francoist past, writes Giles Tremlett in Madrid

Franco watches Juan Antonio Samaranch sworn in as a fascist Movimiento Nacional councillor in 1967

A SINGLE photograph taken some 30 years ago speaks eloquently of the path followed by Juan Antonio Samaranch in his rise to the heights of an Olympic movement shown to be riddled with corruption.

The 1967 photograph depicts the President of the International Olympic Committee, then 46, dressed in the uniform of Spain's Falangist Party as he is sworn in as a member of the national council of *General Franco's fascist*-inspired Movimiento Nacional. It marks just one moment in an unstoppable rise as an apparatchik in General Franco's dictatorship.

It is also a moment conspicuously absent from the biographies of Señor Samaranch handed out from the Olympic headquarters in Lausanne, *Switzerland. Yet it was this* career as a servant of Franco that would propel him on to the Olympic committee and, eventually, to its presidency.

Señor Samaranch began this career during the Spanish Civil War when he was drafted into the government forces fighting Franco's uprising. The young man deserted from his Red Cross unit and went into hiding in his home city of Barcelona. His family claimed later that he had done undercover work for Franco's troops as they marched towards Catalonia. When Franco's forces took over in Barcelona, Señor Samaranch followed a double career as a politician and sports administrator inside the regime.

The smooth Catalan, whose wealthy family owned textile mills, proved expert at the mixture of obeisance to the regime and political manoeuvring necessary to progress through the ranks. He got himself appointed first to the city council, then to the provincial council and, eventually, to Franco's rubber-stamp parliament in Madrid.

He joined the Traditional Spanish Falangist Party in 1955. *Stiff-armed* fascist salutes and the chanting of the Falangist anthem *Cara al Sol* became an essential part of his career progress. Letters to superiors were signed: "Always at your orders. I salute with my arm held high."

He became junior minister for sport and, as head of the Spanish Olympic Committee, at the Mexico City Games in 1968, exhorted athletes to show "*we Spaniards are becoming* a more virile and potent race".

By the time Franco died and democracy came to Spain in 1975, he was the regime's boss in Barcelona and an IOC vice-president. He had also increased his personal wealth by, among other things, building ugly high-rise flats for immigrants on Barcelona's outskirts.

After the dictator's death, *protesters took* to the city streets shouting: "Out with Samaranch!" He was soon dispatched to Moscow to become Spain's Ambassador and, three years later, took over the IOC presidency. *Six years* after that Barcelona was awarded the 1992 Games.

Spain has been happy to draw a veil over Señor Samaranch's past. For many years he was the most prominent Spaniard outside Spain and many, especially fellow Catalans, see him as a man who successfully made the transition from dictatorship to democracy. Shortly after those Games, King Juan Carlos awarded him the title of marqués. He likes to be referred to as "*His Excellency*".

He became enraged when a CBS television journalist started grilling him about his fascist days during last year's Winter Games in Nagano, Japan. He wanted the interview rerun, but CBS refused.

The incident helped to reveal that he had no regrets. "I said I was with Franco. As *well as* 40 million Spaniards," he said, wrongly assuming that most Spaniards had supported the dictator. "I am very proud of my past and what I did for my country."

Scandal claims Kenyan victim

Mukora: claims that he is a victim of circumstances

Nairobi: The Kenyan member of the International Olympic Committee resigned yesterday amid the continuing Olympic bribery scandal, but insisted that he was innocent of any wrongdoing and merely a victim of circumstances (Robin Lodge writes).

Charles Nderitu Mukora, who is also chairman of the National Olympic Committee of Kenya, was one of six IOC members advised last week by Juan Antonio Samaranch to resign following revelations of cash handouts from cities hoping to host the Games. Mr Mukora is alleged to have taken £20,000 from the authorities in Salt Lake City, which was awarded the 2002 Winter Games.

"I have never been party to any improper activities in my 40 years in sport," Mr Mukora said yesterday. "No incentive was requested nor given to me personally. I have not used the monies for personal purposes. I was an innocent victim of circumstances."

However, he did acknowledge that he had received money from Salt Lake City to fund his athletes' training camp in Nanyuki, on the slopes of Mt Kenya.

He also said that Kenya had been granted facilities for its athletes to train at the Australian Institute of Sport by Sydney, host of the 2000 Olympics.

"The only right thing for Charles to do is to call it quits," one Kenyan sports official said.

Brussels spin doctors told truth must often be hidden

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

A TEAM of experts was appointed last night to investigate *allegations of corruption* against European Commissioners, but efforts to clean up the image of the Brussels executive were marred by an embarrassing blunder by its own spin doctors.

The Commission's media service accidentally released an internal memorandum that called for a measure of "hypocrisy" *and evasion when* dealing with the press.

The Commission should not get carried away by the idea of "transparency", it said. "It is necessary to learn how to conceal aspects of information . . . which could give rise to bad interpretation."

The note was drafted by the spokesman for Edith Cresson, *the Commissioner most under* fire over allegations of nepotism, according to officials. The spokeswoman for Jacques Santer, President of the Com*mission, tried to play down the* memo as a personal contribution to the attempt to revamp media strategy.

The need for this became urgent after the crisis this month in which the European Parliament came close to censuring Mr Santer and his 19 fellow Commissioners over claims of incompetence and *corruption. The blunder of the* note's release spoke volumes for the disarray in the Commission as it faces charges of cover-up and a culture of secrecy from politicians and media.

Mme Cresson is one of the main targets of the five experts who were picked by the Parliament and Commission to investigate allegations of abuses. *The creation of the group of* former high officials from the Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors and the Strasbourg Court of Human Rights was *agreed in the deal two weeks* ago which enabled Commissioners to escape a parliamentary vote that could have dismissed them.

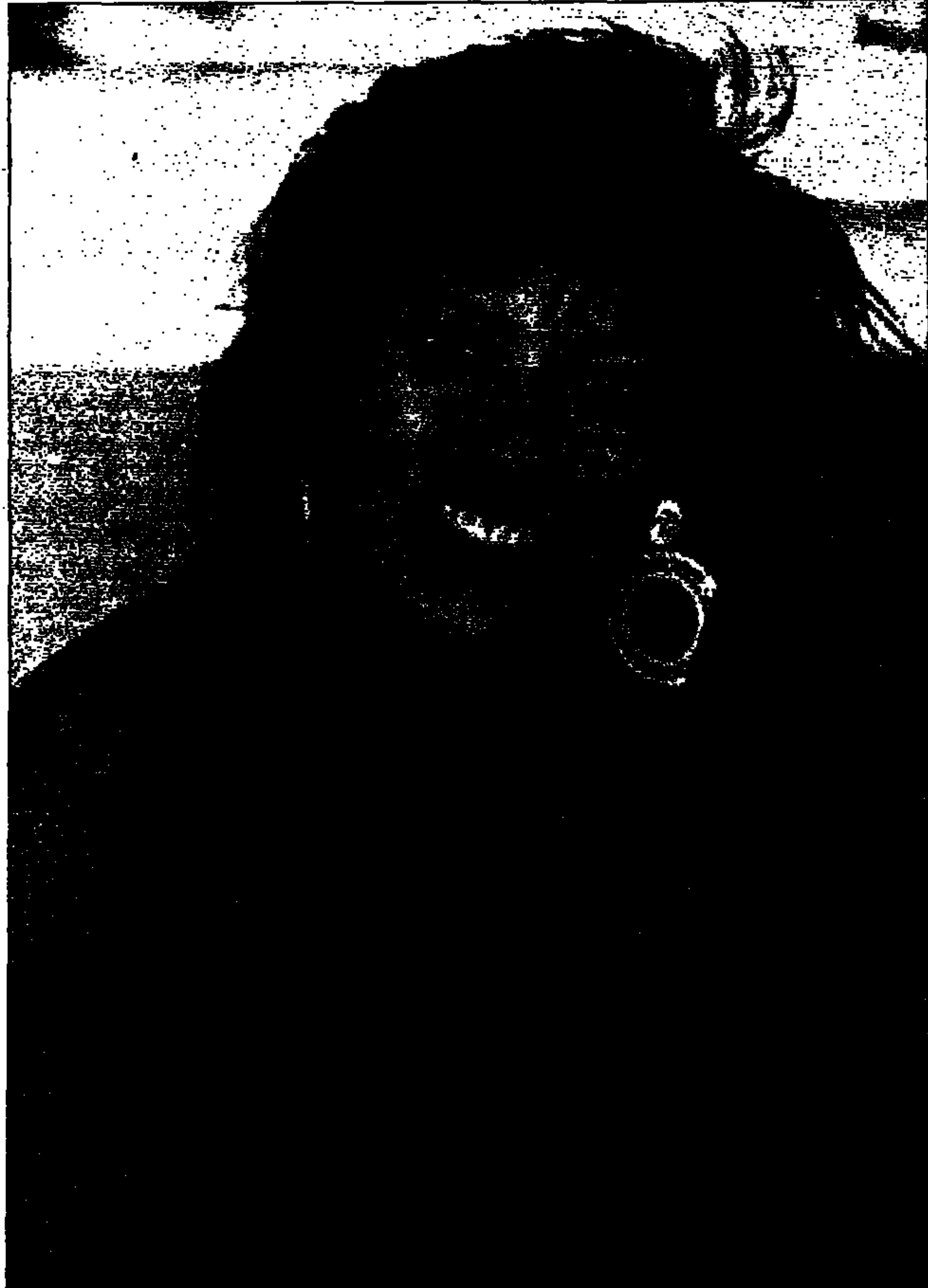
The experts — from Germany, France, Belgium, Spain and The Netherlands — are due to report to the Parliament within a month. They will then start a broader inquiry *into mismanagement of the* spending programmes run by the Commission.

The executive, which has promised to give the investigators free access to documents and staff, yesterday agreed on a timetable for a new code of conduct for Commissioners and new staff rules that would outlaw cronyism and other *questionable practices.*

British Conservative MEPs last night denounced the investigation as insufficiently independent. Edward McMillan-*Scott, leader of the Tory group,* regretted that there would be no British influence and said the Commission was still seeking to control its work. He added: "This has been launched to get Commission officials off the hook, but if it confirms that there is a culture of cover-up it will have served a purpose."

Pauline Green, the Labour *MEP who heads the dominant* Socialist bloc in the Parliament, promised that the assembly would be merciless if wrongdoing was found.

European governments are eager to avoid any further crisis as the Union enters a period of intense negotiations over spending reform, but a negative report by the investi*gators could spark a fresh* showdown with the newly emboldened Parliament.



Julie Scully, apparently the victim of jealous rage, had decided to return to America

Greek sailor 'beheaded and burnt' US model

BY DAMIAN WHITWORTH IN WASHINGTON

AN AMERICAN model who moved to Greece to marry a sailor she met on holiday has been found burnt and decapitated in a remote swamp. Her *Greek boyfriend, who had* gone on television to plead for information on her whereabouts, led police to her charred remains and has been charged with murder.

The torso of Julie Scully, known in her home state of New Jersey as a newspaper "Page 6" pin-up, was discovered in a suitcase outside the northern city of Kavala. Her head had apparently been cut off and tossed into the sea.

Ms Scully, 31, of Mansfield, New Jersey, moved to Kavala last month and planned to marry George Skiadopoulos, a petty officer seven years her junior whom she met on a Caribbean cruise. According to General Pavlos Roubis, head *of Athens security police*, Mr Skiadopoulos, 24, was "blinded by his passion" when he strangled her on January 8 during an argument on a muddy farm road.

Skiadopoulos: has made a rambling confession

Mr Skiadopoulos, he added, was about to be drafted into the army and Ms Scully was preparing to return to America and her three-year-old daughter. According to *the police* Mr Skiadopoulos doused her with petrol and set her on fire. He put her body in a suitcase, using a hacksaw to cut off her head so the body would fit inside. He then went to Athens and concocted a story about her disappearing after a row, before making a rambling confession.

Ms Scully met Mr Skiadopoulos when on the cruise with her successful husband, Tim Nist. The three became friends, but then she asked for a divorce. "For me the toughest part about it is that I wasn't there to protect her," Mr Nist said.

Ms Scully's mother, Julia, said that the Greek had been an "addiction" for her daughter. "I told her not to trust him. But she said 'mom, you read too many novels'."

But Ms Scully had reportedly told her family on January 6 that she missed her daughter and wanted to return to New Jersey.

In her divorce settlement she had received $600,000 (£361,400), *much of which she* had taken with her to Greece.

'Dayton style' talks in Kosovo crisis

BY MICHAEL EVANS DEFENCE EDITOR

A NEW plan for resolving the crisis in Kosovo was emerging yesterday, with the six-nation Contact Group expected to order both sides to attend peace talks in a neutral European country.

The plan, which is likely to be announced in Paris tomorrow, will be backed by a strong warning from Nato today about the possibility of airstrikes if Belgrade continues to defy the international community over settling the political future of the Yugsolav province.

Washington's call for an ultimatum from Nato, effectively giving a countdown to military action, continue to be firmly opposed by the European members of the alliance.

According to diplomatic sources, the only timetable to be imposed on the two sides in the Kosovo conflict will be given *by the Contact Group* which will demand that negotiations must begin within a set period, possibly a week, and that the talks must also be concluded within a certain timetable, maybe ten days.

The sources said that if Belgrade refused to attend the negotiations, "that's when Nato will step in to make it clear *that airstrikes* could follow".

The talks would be in the style of the Dayton negotiations which ended the war in Bosnia, with the first discussions involving each side talking to mediators — and then face-to-face meetings to negotiate a detailed settlement.

The key mediators would be Christopher Hill, the American envoy *whose plan for the* future political status of Kosovo will be the basis for the talks, and Wolfgang Petritsch, the European Union envoy for the region. The Hill plan involves a large degree of self-government for Kosovo, but not independence.

The diplomatic sources said they expected Ibrahim Rugova, the leader of the moderate ethnic Albanians in Kosovo to agree to attend the talks. It will be more difficult to persuade representatives from the Kosovo Liberation Army to take *part. The KLA* has been fighting for independence.

Dragobilje, Yugoslavia: Government troops backed by tanks pounded ethnic Albanian strongholds along a strategic highway yesterday. The attack was launched shortly after dawn in an apparent attempt to push the KLA away from the main highway linking the province with the Yugoslav capital Belgrade. (AP)

Grandmother finds child given up for dead

FROM ANNA BLUNDY IN MOSCOW

WHEN Nadezhda Pugayeva received a note from her son-in-law in 1990 saying "Mum! Me and Olga have had a son!" she could not have foreseen the eight years of anguish that were to follow.

Aleksandr and Olga Digulyev's son, Sergei, was diagnosed as fatally ill and hospital staff advised the young couple to give him up to a children's home, since he would certainly die, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* reported yesterday.

Three days *later the* Digulyevs were told that their son had died. But Mrs Pugayeva could never bring herself to believe it. "I always felt he was alive," she said.

Her hopes were confirmed late last year when by chance she came across a woman who had worked at the Zasviyazhskii Home, not far from the town of Nizhny Novgorod, where little Sergei had allegedly perished.

"I am sure I know a boy of that name," said the woman, and the search was on. Although Sergei had been moved three times since his birth, after a few telephone calls he was found alive and well in a nearby orphanage.

Mrs Pugayeva first went to visit her grandson without telling his mother. When she approached him and told him who she was, he burst into tears and shouted: "Granny!" "I knew him immediately," she said. "He looks just like Sasha [his father]." On November 10 last year Sergei was finally taken home by his proud parents eight years late.

It is still common to abandon sickly infants to the state in Russia, where 9[illegible] per cent of children in orphanages have one or both parents still living. Often the defects that result in a child's institutionalisation are minor.

Senators vote for evidence from Lewinsky

Former White House trainee and two Clinton advisers on trial subpoena list, reports Bronwen Maddox

MONICA LEWINSKY and two presidential advisers must testify in person before the Senate, senators insisted yesterday, after blocking an attempt to scrap the trial of President Clinton.

In a break with its tradition of "open government", the Senate plans to deploy a small team to question the three witnesses on videotape, playing the interviews later to the full Senate in secret.

But yesterday's two votes, which fell almost exactly along party lines, left senators still bemused about whether they had helped to bring a quick end to the saga or had inflicted on themselves yet more months of bitter controversy.

As the Pope briefly drove the Lewinsky saga off the nation's television screens, senators said that they had taken one step forward towards resolving the Clinton impeachment trial. But many were afraid that yesterday's move might prove to be three steps back.

The Senate blocked a Democratic attempt to dismiss the trial immediately by a 56-44 margin. One Democrat — Russ Feingold of Wisconsin — voted with the Republicans to keep the trial going. Instead, the Republican majority pushed through a second motion to extend the trial by calling witnesses.

Again, Mr Feingold, who has said he was "disturbed" by the White House case, was the sole Democrat to cross the aisle. The prosecution — 13 Republican managers from the House of Representatives — have named three they want to summon: Ms Lewinsky, the President's old friend Vernon Jordan, and the White House aide Sidney Blumenthal.

The White House yesterday called foul, saying it was being "blind-sided" by the Senate plan, and mocked the notion that interviewing witnesses could be done quickly. It has threatened an "age of discovery" — spending weeks or months on the legal processes of discovery and deposition.

White House lawyers hinted yesterday that it could take weeks simply to prepare the three witnesses for interview. Mr Jordan is out of the country and the date of his return is uncertain, while Mr Blumenthal's lawyers are engaged in a trial in Baltimore of indefinite length, they let it be known.

Senators and House managers were praying that the White House team, as keen as anyone to see an end to the saga, was bluffing. They may try to pacify Mr Clinton's team with a deal such as "Monica-without-sex" — holding back from questioning the 25-year-old about intimate details of her affair with the President.

The vote to subpoena three witnesses, while expected, will come as a blow to Ms Lewinsky, who is said to have cried herself to sleep before returning to Washington last Sunday to talk to the House prosecution.

After the votes Tom Daschle, the Senate Minority Leader, said: "For the good of the country, it is time to dismiss this trial." The party-line votes, he said, showed that the prosecution would never win the 67 votes needed to remove the President from office. "I would strongly support a motion of censure, and then we would move on," he said.

Explaining why she voted for witnesses, Republican Senator Susan Collins of Maine said "I am one of several Republican senators who is truly struggling with how to vote" on the articles of impeachment against the President.

"I need more evidence" to arrive at a decision, she said. She did not mind whether the process, if followed properly, arrived at the acquittal or conviction of the President.

☐ **Physicist's visit:** President Clinton yesterday had discussions with Stephen Hawking, the Cambridge University physicist and author of *A Brief History of Time* (Damian Whitworth writes).

RICK WILKING / REUTERS

The Pope swings a hockey stick presented to him at the "Light of the World" youth gathering in St Louis

100,000 pray with Pope in St Louis

Washington: The Pope celebrated Mass with 100,000 worshippers yesterday at what was claimed as the biggest indoor gathering in America (Damian Whitworth writes).

At the ceremony at the Trans World Dome, a football stadium in St Louis, Missouri, the Pope delivered a homily in front of a crucifix and a replica of the arch that dominates the city's skyline. His two-day trip was scheduled to conclude with evening prayers in front of a large crowd at the St Louis Basilica and a meeting with Vice-President Al Gore.

The previous evening the Pope had attended a "Light of the World" youth gathering, where young people listened to rock bands before he appeared. He warned his cheering audience of 20,000 at the St Louis Kiel Centre basketball and hockey arena against drifting into a world "filled with darkness" and rife with violence, drugs and easy sex.

President Clinton, who welcomed the Pope to America, said he had found him "clear, forceful and sharp".

Doles eye girl next door

ONE former politician yesterday showed that he had no fear of the taint of the Lewinsky scandal (Bronwen Maddox writes). Bob Dole, who lost to Mr Clinton in the 1996 presidential election, and his wife Elizabeth, who is contemplating running for the White House in 2000, are thinking of buying the former Lewinsky apartment next door to their own in the Watergate block. At the height of the Lewinsky media frenzy a year ago, Bob Dole said drily that he would walk particularly quickly past her door, to avoid an awkward encounter. He has shown amusement rather than bitterness at the scandal, even though, had it broken during the presidential campaign, he might well have won. Reports suggest the Doles are tempted by notions of breaking through the walls between the two apartments, giving Elizabeth Dole more space in her Washington home as she plans her political future.

Hillary: failed attempt to set South Pole record

Polar trek runs out of time

Scott Base: Three weary adventurers who failed in an attempt to be the first to walk to the South Pole and back unaided were flown back to base yesterday.

Australians John Muir and Eric Philips and New Zealander Peter Hillary gave up their attempt after reaching the South Pole on Tuesday. They spent the night at the US Amundsen-Scott Base before abandoning their 84-day expedition and taking a US Hercules shuttle flight back to Williams Field near here.

Mr Hillary, son of Sir Edmund Hillary, the Everest conqueror, said they gave up the return leg because they could not guarantee reaching Scott Base by February 7 when air operations cease for the winter. He said he would not make a second attempt, preferring to tackle something new. *(AFP)*

Hillary may seek post as professor

By Damian Whitworth in Washington

ONE of the most enduring topics of conversation in Washington — whither Hillary Clinton? — took a new turn yesterday after a report that she might be looking for a job at her daughter's university.

The *New York Post* said that discreet inquiries were being made by those close to her about the possibility of a chair being created for the First Lady at Stanford University Law School in California.

The suggestion that Mrs Clinton might head for the West Coast when her husband's term ends at the beginning of 2001 will alarm those who want her to launch her own political career.

But for Mrs Clinton, who was a lawyer in Arkansas and the family's chief breadwinner while her husband was Governor of the Southern state, a lucrative academic job would be an attractive proposition.

A respected chair or professorship would give her time to pursue other interests. She is believed to want a role with an international agency or charity that involves travel.

Mr Clinton is also said to favour making a home in California where he has friends in the film business and could indulge his passion for golf.

However, the pressure on Mrs Clinton to run for the Senate continues to build. Senator Robert Torricelli recently said that he expected Mrs Clinton to run in New York for the seat being vacated in 2000 by the veteran Democrat, Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

A poll this week showed that New Yorkers favour Mrs Clinton over the Mayor, Rudolph Giuliani. Mrs Clinton's spokeswoman said she had no plans to run for elective office.

Jeison Garzón, 12, peers from the ruins of a building in Armenia yesterday before being freed by Red Cross workers. He escaped with minor injuries, despite being buried for 38 hours

Plucked from Colombia hell

Bad weather and aftershocks hold back rescuers, reports Gabriella Gamini from the scene in Quindio province

HEAVY rain and intermittent aftershocks hampered rescue operations in Colombia's Andean coffee-growing heartland where more than 2,000 are feared dead after Monday's earthquake. Hopes of finding more survivors, under mountains of rubble that engulfed much of five towns and dozens of rural villages, faded.

But there were still stories with happy endings. Rescuers, above, pulled Jeison Garzón, 12, from the wreckage of a building just before dawn yesterday. He had only scratches.

Thousands of homeless survivors, meanwhile, faced a third night without electricity and water supplies, huddled around fires in the streets, wrapped in whatever clothes or blankets they could retrieve from crumbled homes.

Hundreds built makeshift shelters from scraps and sheets of tarpaulin, and stood around, stunned, waiting for rescue teams to reach them. One elderly man and his two ten-year-old granddaughters sat on three chairs on top of their crumbled concrete house in a poor district of Armenia, which had been swallowed by the earthquake. They sat stunned, watching the destruction around them and barely able to speak.

Many survivors dug with their bare hands to bury the bodies of relatives. But Jorge Jaramillo was one of the few to find a coffin — for his 20-year-old son, Carlos Antonio, and his two-year-old grandson, Santiago. "I walked ten miles to a nearby village to give my loved ones a decent burial," said the 76-year-old coffee farm worker who, like thousands in the district of Nueva Brasilia, has lost everything.

Officials yesterday reported that 756 bodies had been recovered, hauled from rubble that covered the once leafy, colonial city of Armenia and neighbouring Calarca, in the province of Quindio. Much of the old centre of Pereira, in the province of Riveralda, was also destroyed.

But the death toll is expected to rise and estimates say 2,000 people at least are unaccounted for so far. Red Cross, civil defence and army rescue teams have reached only the centre of urban areas; surrounding villages remain isolated. "Even in the cities, we have managed to reach only a tiny part of the disaster zone, and hopes of finding survivors under debris in these conditions are fast running out," said Walter Cote, director of the Red Cross in Colombia. "We have dug up only 25 per cent of the affected area."

He described the situation as "extremely critical", adding: "Rain is causing landslides on the roads that connect the region to other provinces, and is delaying efforts to start digging up mountains of debris in the cities." More than 1,800 rescue workers were deployed to the region, 100 miles west of Bogotá, but it is predicted that it will be days before they reach most of the affected areas.

President Pastrana, who on Tuesday toured the area, said there was a $15 million (£9 million) disaster fund. Colombia has been pledged up to $100 million in international aid. A ten-man team of British rescue workers, belonging to the International Rescue Corps, is also on the way.

Emergency air services have been set up between Armenia and Bogotá to fly to hospitals some of the thousands reported injured in the tremor, which was six on the Richter scale. Only the hospital in Calarca withstood the disaster, and most of the injured are being treated in makeshift shelters. So far 132 people have been flown out of the region.

The Mayor of Armenia, Alvaro Patino, wants to evacuate the town centre, fearing remaining buildings will tumble. "But we cannot evacuate until we have tried to dig up as many bodies or even survivors that could still be waiting underground," he said. Señor Patino's city has been the worst affected because most of its colonial centre was built on soft volcanic ash.

The scale of the disaster is seen at its starkest in a large hall at the University of Quindio in Armenia, now a mortuary where more than 300 corpses await identification. One woman crouched over the body of a three-year-old child and wept uncrontrollably, saying: "I should never have left her alone in the house." Armenia's sports hall also held rows of unidentified bodies. "Decomposing bodies threaten an epidemic of disease. We cannot wait to bury these people," said Señor Patino.

The Governor of the province, Henry Gómez Tabárez yesterday made a radio appeal for coffins after the shortage led black marketeers to demand $1,500 for anything resembling a long wooden box.

In areas of Armenia reached by rescuers, tragedy and apparent miracles unfold side by side. As civil defence workers pulled the unscathed Jeison Garzón from a four-storey building, Juan Raúl Ossa, a doctor, identified the lifeless body of his mother under concrete lifted by a crane.

Dora Real, 26, and her five-month-old daughter were pulled alive from under three houses. "I saw everything falling on top of me. The kitchen stove and the fridge flew towards us. But all I could think of was how to prevent it from hurting my baby," she said.

LINKS

http://www.alertnet.org — Latest information on relief aid.
http://www.pa2.com/irc — The International Rescue Corps website.
http://www.ifrc.org — Red Cross Website, with direct-from-the-field pictures and reports.
http://geology.usgs.gov/quake.shtm — Website of the United States Geological Survey.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Rock row fuelled by fishing arrests

Gibraltar: Abel Matutes, the Spanish Foreign Minister, yesterday threatened reprisals against Gibraltar after news that 14 fishermen had been arrested with their trawler La Pirana after breaching Gibraltar's laws forbidding the use of nets in British coastal waters (Dominique Searle writes).

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, and Señor Matutes last year declared that they had reached an understanding that would allow traditional fishing if levels returned to those tolerated before 1997. But the fishermen, faced with falling fish stocks and a tough fishing policy from Morocco, have been openly defying British sovereignty.

Mitterrand's gag

Paris: President Mitterrand intervened in a 1993 corruption probe, allegedly to head off a zealous magistrate investigating the business affairs of Roger-Patrice Pelat, a friend of the late President, and looking into the allocation of government apartments to Mitterrand's mistress and his illegitimate daughter (Ben Macintyre writes). *Le Parisien* published a letter to François Léotard, then Defence Minister, calling for action against Thierry Jean-Pierre, a Le Mans magistrate.

Freetown death toll

Freetown: In the first official estimate of the number of dead since fighting broke out in the Sierra Leone capital early this month, authorities said that 2,768 bodies had been collected around the city by January 23. Hospital sources claimed the death toll was much higher. Renewed shelling and mortar fire broke out on the western edge of the Freetown peninsula, a day after the Nigerian-led intervention force declared it would launch an offensive against rebels. *(AFP)*

Diana author sued

Nairobi: A Kenyan judge is to sue Andrew Morton, right, author of *Diana: Her True Story*, over allegations in his latest book, a biography of President Moi. Mr Justice Richard Kwach said a section of the book — *Moi: The Making of an African Statesman* — dealing with the murder in 1990 of Robert Ouko, the former Foreign Minister, libels him by insinuating that he was susceptible to manipulation.

Scolded son shot sister

Minneola, Florida: An 11-year-old boy shot and killed his 13-year-old sister after his mother told him off, a deputy sheriff told a court here. Patrick Domanic Boykin Jr told an emergency telephone operator that he shot his sister, Constance, because his mother had hit him after a dispute with the girl. On a tape-recording the boy is heard saying: "I shot my sister. I got whupped twice. Then I got real mad." He has been charged with first-degree murder. *(AP)*

Cold snap in Lapland

Helsinki: A wave of Arctic air swept northern Finland and Sweden with temperatures in Lapland falling to a 137-year record of -59.8F (-51C). The Finnish National Meteorological Institute said the temperature was recorded at Kittila, 125 miles from the Arctic Circle. In 1862, also in Lapland, a reading of minus -60.3F (-51.3C) was recorded. *(AFP)*

Gloomy Japan heeds words of doom from Nostradamus

FROM ROBERT WHYMANT IN TOKYO

ANY foreigner stumbling into the so-called "Nostradamus corner" of a Tokyo bookshop might be forgiven for believing Japan to be a nation of manic-depressives. Here customers snap up the doom-laden predictions of the 16th-century French astrologer as if there were no tomorrow.

With similar urgency, Japanese publishers are racing to get new books on the shelves before July 4 when a war will break out that will destroy a third of the world's population — should Nostradamus prove correct.

One major Tokyo bookshop boasts 185 titles devoted to Nostradamus, five published this month alone. The majority, like a ten-volume series that has so far sold six million copies, advise readers to take the doomsday prophecies to heart and prepare for the worst.

Plagued by the deepest recession since the Second World War, a record level of company bankrupcies and the worst unemployment in recent memory, the Japanese seem only too ready to believe an even bigger catastrophe is only months away. One poll showed that about 20 per cent lend credence to the Nostradamus scenario.

This is not the first such boom to sweep Japan — there was a similar avalanche of books during the Gulf War, which believers also said was foreshadowed in Nostradamus's quatrains.

In fact, Nostradamus at his darkest is in step with a national tendency to look on the black side whenever possible, say some commentators.

Japan has the world's second biggest economy, relative income equity and virtually no poverty, yet even serious publications, looking ahead to the new year, compared the country to the *Titanic* steaming towards disaster.

Jordan palace tries to stifle talk of feud

Kingdom's rulers stage show of support for heir apparent, writes Christopher Walker in Amman

AMID rumours of a possible abdication for health reasons by the absent King Hussein, his ruling family yesterday struggled to boost support for the inexperienced new Crown Prince Abdullah, 36, and to patch up palace feuds threatening Jordan's stability.

Despite government denials, resident diplomats confirmed that the armed forces were on alert in case of subversion by neighbouring Syria or internal strife by Islamic extremists or disgruntled backers of the former Crown Prince Hassan bin Talal.

Jordanian officials added to the uncertainty that has seen more than $200 million (£123 million) withdrawn from the kingdom in recent months by declaring themselves "very worried" about the 63-year-old monarch's failing health. One said that the King's condition had "deteriorated sharply".

The new prognosis has exacerbated anxiety among Jordan's 4.6 million people who have been given little to go on beyond the bare facts that the King was rushed back to the US for urgent cancer treatment on Tuesday.

"We are desperate to know the truth about his condition, but only the foreigners will tell us: the others are all too frightened about how we may react," said a 46-year-old Amman shopkeeper who asked for her name not to be printed.

The official revealed that the King had been suffering from high fevers from the first day after he returned in triumph from a supposed six-month cure for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma over a week ago. His weaken condition could indicate an "infection" or a "reappearance of lymphoma which would be much more serious".

As government employees replaced portraits of Hassan with those of Abdullah, royal protocol officers were laying on a huge show of support for the man they are sure will soon be Jordan's new ruler.

Army and intelligence chiefs, foreign diplomats, politicians and members of the Government gathered in Amman's Raghadan Palace at 10am to pay their respects.

There was a moment of drama when the ousted Crown Prince Hassan, 51, portly and moustachioed, strode in about 30 minutes late. Under pressure to signal an end to the rift that has split the royal family, and still smarting from accusations by his brother the King that he had "abused power" in the six months of Hussein's absence, the Prince broke into the queue of dignatories to offer his good wishes.

"May you be successful, *inshallah* (God willing)," the deposed Prince told his nephew, having earlier — according to senior palace sources, resisted attempts by the ailing Hussein to persuade him to resign from the position of heir apparent which he had held since 1965. He had built up a cadre of senior officials and members of the security apparatus loyal to him and expectant of future favours who now face a bleak future.

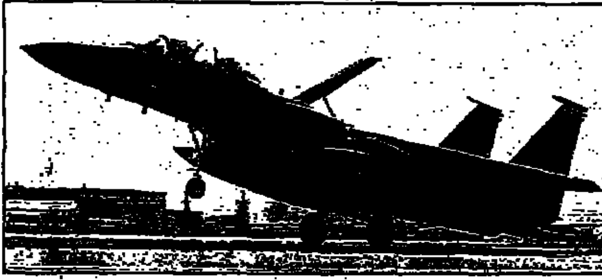
"Hassan is trouble; his wife (Princess Sarvath) is trouble. They have been trying together to grab power for themselves and their own family," said an elderly Amman inhabitant who would talk only at an isolated spot in the city.

The rumour mill has begun to turn against Hassan. He is depicted as having too great a sympathy for Islamic extremists, accused of being covertly pro-Israeli because he studied Hebrew at Oxford, and even of plotting a coup d'état.

"Of course, he is not happy, and in shock at changes which he did not foresee," said an aide. "But he is not about to contest his brother's decision."

JAMAL NASRALLAH /AFP

The new Crown Prince Addullah, King Hussein's eldest son, reviewing a guard of honour in Amman yesterday



A US F15E Strike Eagle returns to base at Incirlik in Turkey after a mission over the Iraqi no-fly zone

Iraq MPs call for revolts in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

IRAQ courted further isolation in the Arab world yesterday when its rubber-stamp parliament urged the people of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to overthrow their leaders for supporting the British and American airstrikes on Iraq last month.

A statement issued after a two-day session of the 250-seat parliament said Iraq gave up hopes of support from Arab states when a recent meeting of the Arab Leagueissued a resolution critical of Baghdad. Iraq would now focus on "Arab masses who stood against the December aggression", it said.

The statement echoed the call from President Saddam Hussein for ordinary Arabs to topple governments that had close ties to Washington. It now gives him ostensible support for his attempts to cow Saudi Arabia and Kuwait into withdrawing permission for US and British military bases on their territory.

The parliament also demanded compensation from both countries for "aggression" against Baghdad and urged Arab states to flout trade sanctions. But it resisted more inflammatory calls from some deputies to withdraw recognition of Kuwait.

The parliamentary invective against "hired regimes" in the Arab world came amid reports that Abu Nidal, one of the world's most feared terrorists, has been in Baghdad since early December and enjoys Saddam's protection.

There was speculation that the isolated and increasingly frustrated Iraqi leader might help the Palestinian renegade, responsible for killing hundreds of people in the 1970s and 1980s, to revitalise his terrorist network to strike at Baghdad's enemies.

His presence in Iraq, if confirmed, would add yet another dangerous element to the increasingly unstable situation in the Gulf. In response to almost daily challenges, Washington disclosed that since Operation Desert Fox it had adopted a more aggressive policy to protect American and British aircraft policing Iraqi no-fly zones. It allows its pilots to retaliate against a wider range of Iraqi air defence sites if attacked and not simply those that pose the immediate threat.

Baghdad insisted it would not be intimidated. "Iraq will continue to challenge with all its capabilities and means American and British planes which violate our air space," said Taha Yassin Ramadan, Iraq's Vice-President.

Abu Nidal's organisation, the Fatah Revolutionary Council, was racked by bloody feuding in the early 1990s, but still has 200 to 300 followers who have remained active in recent years, particularly against Arab targets. Although responsible for the deaths of at least ten Britons, his group has not attacked British or US targets for a decade. Saddam has also generally shunned the use of terrorism abroad for more than a decade, ejecting Abu Nidal from Baghdad in 1983 when he needed Western support for his war against Iran.

"Abu Nidal's network is not what it was, but it could still cause problems in the Arab world and Europe if Saddam decides to pump money into it," said a Western source in Cairo.

BROADCASTING STANDARDS COMMISSION

Complaint by Mr Lionel Anthony

Summary of Adjudication

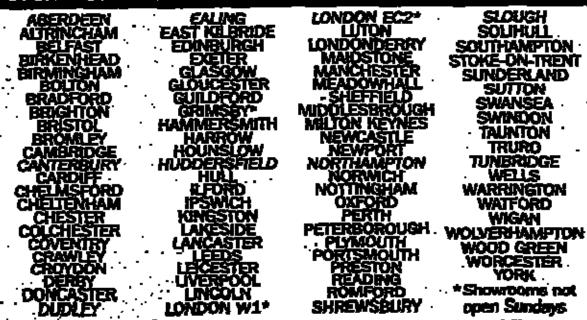
The Broadcasting Standards Commission has partly upheld a complaint from Mr Lionel Anthony of unjust or unfair treatment in an edition of the Tommy Boyd Show, broadcast by Talk Radio on 29 July 1998. The programme featured a phone-in discussion about driving instructors. Mr Anthony, a driving instructor, telephoned to participate.

The Commission noted that Mr Anthony's contribution was unusually long for a programme of this type. It considered that he was afforded a reasonable opportunity to respond to Mr Boyd's statements and that he did so clearly, sensibly and with dignity. The Commission found no unfairness in this respect.

However, the Commission noted that, unlike other contributors, Mr Anthony was insulted and abused by Mr Boyd. While recognising that the robust and confrontational nature of the programme was well-established and likely to be familiar to Mr Anthony, the level of aggression and personal abuse to which he was subjected was excessive. This was unfair.

Accordingly, the complaint was upheld in part.

A full copy of the adjudication can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to: the Broadcasting Standards Commission, 7 The Sanctuary, London, SW1P 3JS. A copy of the summary is available on the Commission's website at www.bsc.org.uk.



Pill helps to prevent asthma

Dr Thomas Stuttaford reports on a new asthma drug; eyedrops for glaucoma that reduce the need for surgery; pills to control cholesterol; and a breakthrough in the treatment of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, was in benevolent form when he presented the annual Prix Galien awards at the Stationer's Hall in London this week. These prizes are awarded to those companies within the pharmaceutical industry that have recently introduced the most useful and innovative products. The medication is expected to conform to that clichéd concept — a "breakthrough".

A second award is given for commendable pharmaceutical research and development. This was presented to Cambridge Antibody Technology Ltd in recognition of its unique libraries of human antibodies and, more specifically, for its work with a human antibody that may prevent scarring of the eye after surgery for retinal detachment and operative treatment of glaucoma.

It should not be only the Health Secretary who looks benignly at the pharmaceutical industry. The Chancellor of the Exchequer should also have been there smiling, even beaming. The pharmaceutical industry is second only to North Sea oil as an export earner for the UK. It pours £6 million a day into medical research. In the past 40 years newly introduced medicines have doubled the number of patients who can be treated in their own homes for 12 major diseases. This, as well as being advantageous for patients, saves the Exchequer £10 billion a year. Five of the world's current 20 leading modern medicines were discovered in the UK.

The winner of this year's Prix Galien award was Singulair, the first of a new class of drug, leukotriene receptor antagonists (LRTAs) for the treatment of asthma. When Singulair was introduced by Merck Sharp & Dohme in February 1998, there had been no comparable innovation in the treatment of asthma for 25 years. Singulair is an add-on preparation, useful in the control of mild to moderate asthma, which is inadequately kept at bay by either inhaled corticosteroids or short acting B_2-agonists such as Bricanyl or Serevent. It is combined with existing prophylactic anti-asthma medication and must not be used as a substitute. Singulair has no value in the treatment of an emergency attack. Its value lies in prevention, particularly of exercise-induced asthma. It is available in tablet form for adults, and in chewable tablets for children over six. The dose needs to be taken only once a day.

For ten years doctors have worked on antagonists to counteract cysteinyl leukotrienes, formidable causes of inflammation in asthma. The leukotrienes are responsible for increased mucous production, they make mucous more sticky and therefore less mobile, and increase the swelling in the bronchial tubes which become narrowed during an attack of asthma. Further narrowing in the bronchial tubes is then induced by the inflammation, which causes contraction of their muscles and hence constriction, resulting in wheezing and gasping.

Asthma affects 3.4 million people in the UK every year. A statement last autumn from the National Asthma Campaign said that there are far too many emergency admissions to hospital with asthma attacks. The problem is not that the patient's condition did not warrant immediate admission but that with better prophylactic treatment many could have been prevented — in an appreciable proportion of these patients Singulair may now be part of that care.

Dr Martin Partridge, the chief medical adviser to the National Asthma Campaign, says: "The opportunity offered by hospital admission, or emergency department attendance, to give people with asthma the information they need to control their own condition is often missed." He added that, with better communication, and clear spoken advice backed up by written instructions on agreed self-management, many more people with asthma would be able to take control of their condition and stay out of hospital.

TELEGRAPH COLOUR LIBRARY

An incautious Western diet raises cholesterol, which can lead to a heart attack, but statins reduce the level

Partial to pizza? Stock up on statins

FRANK DOBSON probably welcomed an evening at the Prix Galien awards, away from the anxieties over the cost of Viagra. Little did he realise, perhaps, that in the heavy cost of the prescription of statins, a group of cholesterol-lowering drugs, there is another unexploded financial bomb that cannot be defused by talk of lifestyle drugs. One of the statins, Lipitor (atorvastatin), by Parke-Davis, also won a Prix Galien award.

It was always a riddle why the effect of statins was so much more dramatic than that of other cholesterol-lowering drugs, even though the final cholesterol levels were not so very different. New research, not yet widely published, has shown that statins also alter the nature of the dangerous atheromatous plaques that fur up the arteries and which, by rupturing, cause heart attacks or strokes. The statins make plaques harder and more adherent.

A cardiologist remarked recently that if he had any doubts about his own arteries, he would disregard existing recommendations for the prescription of statins and, whatever his cholesterol level, start taking them straight away. Once this initial research is confirmed, any patient with a likelihood of heart disease will expect to be prescribed statins. My own evening statin is now as much a part of my bedtime routine as cleaning my teeth.

People with a raised low-density cholesterol, too much triglyceride (another blood fat), signs of cardiovascular disease or a family history of heart disease should offer up daily prayers of thanks for the discovery of the statin group of drugs. These block the synthesis of cholesterol in the liver and facilitate the removal of cholesterol-rich lipoproteins from the blood.

Statins have shown an ability to reduce the number of further heart attacks after the first. They also make a heart attack less likely in those people with relevant risk factors.

Lipitor is similar to other statins but has a greater ability to lower cholesterol — in particular the pernicious low-density lipoprotein and triglyceride levels — without any increase in side-effects.

Alternative to eye surgery

EVERYONE who has had their eyes tested by an optometrist will have experienced a puff of air directed at the eyeball. This measures the pressure of the fluid within the eye and is a screening device to detect glaucoma. This pressure may be measured more accurately by applying the pressure-sensitive tip of a tonometer to the eye. Too high an intra-ocular pressure — the result of some obstruction to the free circulation of fluid between the posterior and anterior chambers of the eyeball — damages the optic nerve.

Medical, rather than surgical, treatment of glaucoma is dependent on the lowering of pressure within the eye. Beta-blocker eye drops are usually prescribed first, but there are other means of improving the circulation of the fluid, or of decreasing fluid production. David Broadway, a specialist in the treatment of glaucoma at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, says: "Our goal is to set an appropriate target pressure for any particular individual. Low target pressures are needed in severe or rapidly progressive disease." A Prix Galien award was given to Xalatan (latanoprost), an innovative eye drop introduced by Pharmacia & Upjohn to treat glaucoma. It is the first topical prostaglandin to ease intra-ocular pressure by increasing fluid loss through the sclera (covering) of the eyeball. The drops need to be applied only once a day. "New therapies are available which seem to be more potent and with fewer side-effects than existing drops," says Mr Broadway. "They have reduced the need for surgery." Xalatan is already the second most commonly prescribed eye drop for glaucoma.

Glaucoma is the name given to a group of diseases of the eye that cause progressive damage to the optic nerve so that the patient's field of vision is reduced. If it is left untreated, tunnel vision — in which the sufferer can see only any objects immediately ahead — and, later, blindness may supervene. An ophthalmologist not only needs to know the intra-ocular pressure but must assess the condition of the patient's optic nerve and test the visual field so that any minor loss may be spotted at an early stage.

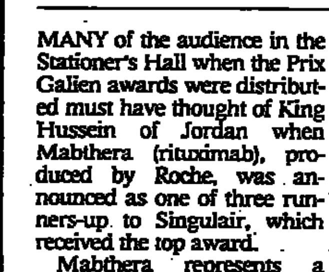
Just to make diagnosis more confusing, glaucoma may occur with a normal intra-ocular pressure, as the optic nerve's susceptibility to pressure varies enormously. One sixth of patients with evidence of optic nerve damage from glaucoma have a "normal" pressure. Conversely, some people have a high pressure but an undamaged optic nerve and intact visual fields.

Early detection depends on regular ophthalmic testing. People with close relatives who have had glaucoma should be examined annually over the age of 30; others should be tested for it at least every two years from 40. If glaucoma is neglected in its early stages, its progress becomes more difficult to halt.

TELEGRAPH COLOUR LIBRARY

Too much pressure in the eyeball can indicate glaucoma

New drug fights cancer without side-effects



MANY of the audience in the Stationer's Hall when the Prix Galien awards were distributed must have thought of King Hussein of Jordan when Mabthera (rituximab), produced by Roche, was announced as one of three runners-up to Singulair, which received the top award.

Mabthera represents a breakthrough in the treatment of relapsing, low-grade non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, from which King Hussein is suffering. It was developed as a response to the failure, in many cases, of traditional treatment with radiation and chemotherapy.

King Hussein is not alone in his troubles. In the UK, 12 people in 100,000 are diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's every year. The cancer, which strikes the lymphatic system, ranks seventh in the lethal league of cancers in the UK — 4,450 people die from it annually. The incidence is increasing but no one knows why. Licensed only last June, Mabthera is the first monoclonal antibody prescribable for the treatment of any kind of cancer. It works in a different way to conventional chemotherapy by targeting specific cancer cells, and thereby activates the body's immune system to attack them and causes the malignant cells to self-destruct.

This targeted action enables an effective dose to be given, but at the same time avoids the more widespread adverse effects which are experienced when the toxicity is not confined to the malignant cells but affects the healthy ones, too.

The usual side-effects of chemotherapy — hair loss, nausea, vomiting, fatigue and weight loss — are therefore avoided. However, nothing is trouble-free: sometimes the patient suffers a fever, chills and rigors after their first dose. With Mabthera, periods of remission in the disease are longer, and life during these periods of remission is of much better quality than when conventional drugs are used.

In early research, 87 per cent of patients treated responded, but it is too early to say how long this remission will last.

Day of disaster I will never forget

As Colombia attempts to grapple with devastation, Martin Barrow recalls the earthquake that overwhelmed Peru in 1970 when he was eight, and the terrible impact it had on him and his family

I cannot help but look in wonder at friends who claim to remember, in amazing detail, events that took place when they were toddlers. How could a five-year-old *really* remember that, I think scornfully?

For I, who can instantly answer any old trivia you care to quiz me on, have almost no memories of my early years until some months after my eighth birthday.

As far as I can make out, my life began on May 31, 1970, even though my birth certificate states September 18, 1961. It was a Sunday, a sunny day of the sort when people laze around simply watching time go by. All traffic mysteriously disappears, the phone doesn't ring; even children sense that they will get no change from their parents if they disrupt this tranquillity.

I am thousands of miles from London, in a northern town in Peru. I am joined by my three brothers in the small study of our home, working through homework my father has set us, knowing there are better ways to spend a day such as this one. There must be friends to play with, footballs to be kicked, ice-cream to be licked. It is almost 3pm. If I hurry there may still be time before supper. The house is eerily quiet; my baby sister, born two weeks ago, is asleep in her cot, my mother resting beside her. In the kitchen the radio is silent, our housemaid enjoying a rare day of rest.

You see, all this I remember. The sounds, the colours, even the smells. I also recall the distant sound, like thunderclouds rolling in from the sea. I remember how quickly it seemed to move closer and closer, until it was above us, and all around us. How glass panels in windows began to vibrate. How books began tumbling from shelves and lights swung from ceilings. How we four brothers looked at each other in fear.

My father came rushing through the house, followed by my mother. I remember him shouting for us to run outside, and I recall my mother's terrified stare. We followed, joining neighbours as they spilled into the street. As my feet touched the potholed road it was already shaking so violently it was difficult to remain standing. As I crossed the road, the earthquake appeared to intensify. I fell. I remember seeing walls crumble, bricks and plaster crashing to the ground. Streetlights buckled and electricity cables sparked and splintered. Neighbouring houses seemed to come to life, dancing and swinging madly. The noise was deafening. I leant against a wall and was bounced off as it swung against me. It was my mother who remembered the baby; in our desperation to leave the house, we had left behind my new sister. Mum screamed; my dad ran back into the building, somehow making his way through the house which was obstructed by our belongings: ornaments, pictures, books, bottles, the television set. Katherine, bless her, slept peacefully through the whole thing.

Soon after my father rejoined us, with baby in arms, it was all over. I remember choking on the thick clouds of dust rising from the road and, briefly, the silence, quickly interrupted by the wailing of the many women and children, myself included, who looked around in disbelief, unable yet to understand the enormity of what had taken place.

There were no deaths in our street nor in the immediate neighbourhood. There were no gaping cracks in the road. Despite collapsed walls and broken windows, our prosperous housing estate emerged almost unscathed. We were the lucky ones.

Officially, the earthquake was responsible for the deaths of 66,000 and left another 80,000 without homes. But who knows how many of Peru's poorest inhabitants, living beyond the reach of government statistics, really died. We lived less than 100 miles from the epicentre. Just two hours' drive from our home in Trujillo, more than 5,000 people died in one town alone. Residents of Yungay, at the foot of the Andes, were buried under a mass of ice and mud that crashed from the mountains.

Roads and bridges were destroyed, leaving tens of thousands of Peruvians out of the reach of rescue services. An impoverished nation was ill-prepared to deal with a natural disaster on such a scale. Survivors used their bare hands in vain attempts to drag loved ones from the rubble. Weeks passed before contact could be made with isolated areas in the mountains.

During the next few days, smaller quakes followed as the earth settled. There was no electricity and no running water. At night my family gathered downstairs to sleep huddled together under a table, my father drawing from his experience as a child in London during the Blitz. By day, I joined friends playing in the rubble of demolished buildings. It never occurred to me then how my parents provided food for their family; they just did. I remember the evenings when we ate by candlelight, with a battery-powered radio giving the names of people known to have died and helping those who survived to get in touch with relatives.

The Peruvian football team was set to make its debut in the World Cup in Mexico and every few minutes the radio played the team's signature tune, hoping to inspire Peruvians to find the strength to emerge from the disaster.

Now, as an adult with two young children of my own, I understand that what appeared to be hardship for us, represented extraordinary luxury for the thousands who spent the following months living in camps, with no roof over their heads and with little to eat. Only now can I understand the anxiety of my mother, still debilitated by childbirth, in seeking to protect her five children.

> In our desperation to leave, we had left behind my new sister

We were flown out of Trujillo one month later, when the airport was deemed safe, to return to England. For the next few months we were taken to relatives while my father stayed in Peru, helping his company to rebuild its factory and restore production.

Ten months after the earthquake my mother died. Doctors will attest she died of cancer and I have no scientific reason to disagree. I saw her waste away before my own eyes and I saw the drugs on her bedside table so I cannot deny her illness. But I believe her spirit was broken on May 31, 1970, and that she could never have recovered.

But, as I have already said, I am not sure that I can trust the recollections of my own childhood.

RAYMOND DEPARDON/MAGNUM

Officially, the earthquake left 66,000 Peruvians dead and 80,000 homeless. The country was ill-equipped to cope with disaster and tens of thousands were out of reach of the rescue services

Home alone with Will

Lucy Hawking imagined she could cope easily as a single parent — until her husband worked abroad

We made a sorry pair that day, sitting in Pizza Express as we waited for the locksmith.

Until my one-year-old son William and I got home from a weekend away to find I'd lost the door keys, I thought I had life as a single parent sussed. I thought that by a pure act of will I had turned myself into a strong, competent modern mother, coping bravely while my husband worked abroad for a few months.

I had hoped, as all parents do — including the teenage girls whom Jack Straw thinks should give up their babies — that, if I had to, I could look after my child alone. But as I distractedly passed William bits of tomatoey dough for him to throw on the floor, I was forced to admit that this was much harder than I had dreamt.

You may think that being locked out has little to do with being a single parent. But when it happens to you and a tired, hungry child, and there is nowhere to turn, the effect is shattering. There is no one to rush home with spare keys, no one to help to change the baby in the hall while the locksmith drills the door to pieces, or to give him supper once we finally fall into the flat. And that was only our first week.

During my husband's absence I have experienced the practical, although not the financial, demands that single-parenthood brings. I am 28 and have a university education; I also have the good fortune neither to want nor to need to work full-time: I have a supportive family and friends who pitch in at a second's notice. Yet despite all this, I have found every resource stretched to breaking point by the rigours of dealing with a small boy who has the energy of an Olympic athlete and the curiosity of 1,000 cats. I am in awe of those who cope all day, every day, alone, with never a minute to themselves.

Lucy Hawking and William

It would be nice to think that as time went by I was getting better at it: effortlessly producing organic meals, working part-time, keeping the flat spotless and keeping up to date with current affairs while everyone said how marvellous I was. That didn't happen.

Each time I began to think that I knew how to cope with our lives, something would throw me entirely off balance again. After the key drama we both got flu. William is a feisty chap who weighs something near a ton, or so it felt as I lugged him off to the doctor's, where he was given antibiotics and I wasn't. At night, hearing him cough horribly tore me in two — or rather, into one part that selfishly wanted to stay in bed and be as ill as I felt, and another that demanded I get up and deal with him. I tried to kid myself that it was only a little while since he'd been tiny enough for me to get up several times in the night every night and I should just try to reverse back to that era. The big problem with that idea was that I had so often used the old "It's your turn to go" line on a long-suffering husband that generally I never had any turns at all.

I tried having William in bed with me, but after he hit me on the head with his bottle and tried to stand up on my chest while I slept, I was soon fed up. And having been up all night, the next day was a write-off. I walked as though I was moving through thick treacle, feeling bleary and hopeless.

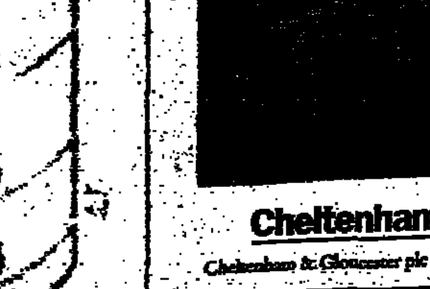
Illness probably scares single parents more than anything else. It is frightening and exhausting for both parent and child. Nurseries won't take sick children, which means that working parents have to take time off; this hardly endears them to employers in today's cold economic climate.

And children can't be relied on to fall ill during normal surgery hours. The recent wave of diarrhoea that engulfed South London's parents and babies meant we had to visit a clinic on a Saturday because our usual doctor was not on call. Arriving there with a baby whose nappy needed changing every few minutes, we were confronted with a steep flight of steps and no ramp. I asked the porter how to get in: she said "Can't you carry him?" I looked down the stairs at my sweet and very heavy baby in his pushchair and despaired.

Often I wonder how we get to the end of the day. And when the squeaks and murmurs from the baby's room turn to blissful silence, the flat becomes silent, too, except for the television. The evenings are very quiet — just me, a sandwich and some show I would never watch in other circumstances. But come the end of the day, I am too tired to do anything self-improving or useful, too tired to make myself something proper to eat. Anyway, the idea of settling down to a nice meal for one is anathema.

Non-parents reading this will think me a whinger. Don't I know that having children is one of the greatest joys one can possibly have? And it *is* extraordinary and amazing. But the world is not kind to parents or families. Financially, socially, in terms of a career, health or sanity, parents cannot be blamed for feeling that the odds are stacked against them. And that's when there are two of you.

The work doesn't double when there is just one — it triples or quadruples. Jack Straw has caused a storm by making a politically incorrect, saddening yet devastatingly accurate point. It is obviously not impossible to be a single parent, but it is very, very tough.



Put out the birthday Bunting

Peter Stothard on the secret life of Our Man in Tehran

A few weeks ago the archivist of *The Times* sent around the office his annual list of our domestic anniversaries, the fortieth year of a football commentator, the seventy-fifth year of Letters to the Editor, the centenary of a once celebrated drama critic. Fifty years ago this week, the note revealed, was the first day on which the poet Basil Bunting began work as our correspondent in Tehran.

Bunting of *The Times?* It did not sound very likely. His name does not appear in the official history and ours is a paper which, from Thackeray to Graham Greene, has much prized its literary sons. Bunting was no mean poet. His most famous piece, *Briggflatts*, was "the finest long poem to have been produced in England since *Four Quartets*", according to Cyril Connolly. Surely, if he had been one of our staff, he should also have been one of our heroes.

He was perhaps the master of too many arts. As a classical student, I remember being encouraged to read his translations ("overdrafts" he called them) from Horace and Lucretius. He was a genius at adapting Latin sense to English rhythms. He was also of refreshingly independent mind. His version of one of Catullus's miniature epics ended, after only 22 bad-tempered lines, with the assertion "and why Catullus bothered to write pages and pages of this drivel mystifies me".

> He was perhaps the master of too many arts

But there was also his critical campaigning for the music of Monteverdi, his scholastic love affair with the Lindisfarne gospel illustrations, his writings on Japan and old Persia, and *The Spoils*, a justly celebrated war poem which wanders from the desert to the dockyards of Rosyth by many strange and magnificent ways.

His archive file is slim. His first salary was £350 a year. He had ended the war as a British vice-consul in Isfahan and wrote with an easy subversive authority about the threat from Mohammad Mosaddeq who in 1952 threw him out of the country. Like all correspondents of those days, the reports which he sent back to senior editors were better than the articles those editors chose to publish. There is a fine dry sketch of the Persian Queen Mother who "has always had an itch to interfere in politics". But it would be hard to detect a literary genius at work.

The most graphic cable concerns his departure. "Bunting arrived Baghdad postexpulsion expersia accompanied wife ettwo yearold daughter. Made difficult journey parcar viaheaviest rainstorm. . . wife grilled, repeat grilled parpolice attempt force her upgive british nationality but she refused despite threat treat infant daughter as persian national prevent child leaving country cumparent".

This sad story did not, however, have the impact that its author intended. The news editor of *The Times* had a crisp way with words himself: "we sympathise and regret no other vacancy abroad stop" came the reply from Printing House Square three days later. The expenses department, after a certain amount of carefully minuted discussion, did allow him to keep his office Ford Mercury. And that was the *Times* career of B. Bunting.

An elegant leading article was penned to protest at the expulsion of our man. But, as the poet wrote in a letter to the Editor after a similar leader on journalists and dictators in 1955: "Sir, you expressed as much indignation three and a half years ago, when your own correspondent was expelled from Tehran, but showed the depths of your concern for the freedom of the press by leaving him to starve."

On his return to Northumbria Bunting did, indeed, have a child Persian bride to support and no means of maintaining his correspondent's pasha style of life. Whether because of hunger, anger or because he was forced to earn his living thereafter as a sub-editor on *The Newcastle Daily Journal*, he maintained no great love of journalism or *The Times*. In the third part of *Briggflatts* he paints a picture of pathetic scavengers wallowing in warm ordure, eating each other's trash and pretending to understand the world. Although the setting is among the soldiers of Alexander, the target is clear.

One of the parasites is named Hastor, a man who stares at the stink around him beneath "dung thickened lashes". According to a new biography of Bunting, this is a joke against Colonel John Astor, the proprietor of *The Times*. The more likely butt of Bunting's bitter wit is Astor's son Hugh, a fellow foreign correspondent whose paychecks were more secure than the poet's own. According to the archive file, Bunting was still in correspondence with H.Astor in 1953, offering pungent advice on Persian affairs. But by 1965, the successful year of *Briggflatts* and an almost miraculous rebirth for the Beatles decade, Bunting could repay old slights with impunity.

Why did Bunting join *The Times?* And why was he forced to leave? He used to claim a wartime career in spying for Britain, saying that with his antique literary Persian he could communicate with Bakhtiari tribesmen and keep them from the Nazi embrace. He had a lifelong passion for underage girls and, once he had done the decent thing by marrying one of them, he may have found even the stuffy Fifties *Times* more tolerant than the Foreign Office. Perhaps he used his journalism to continue his spying or perhaps, as wartime rules were replaced by rules of peace, *The Times* thought he did and took appropriate evasive action. This secret life is the subject of Keith Alldritt's biography. It mostly remains a secret — even from the wonderful *Times* archive which records both the writers whom we like to remember and those whom we have preferred to forget.

The Poet as Spy, by Keith Alldritt (Aurum Press, £19.95).

"YOU'VE GOT A CHOICE: THE BULLET, THE HURLING STICK, OR THE DODGY CORNERSHOP SANDWICH..."

Workshop of the world

British investors know our manufacturing industries could be global leaders again

Anatole Kaletsky

It may be hard to believe, after all the recent whingeing about the destruction of once-great industrial firms by an insensitive Government and a brutally overvalued currency, but Britain's manufacturing industries could soon become a source of good news.

This statement is not just based on the small, though very significant, improvement in this week's CBI industrial trends survey, or on yesterday's trade figures. Far more important than these short-term economic performance indicators has been the recent spate of corporate deals involving key British firms such as British Aerospace, BP-Amoco, General Electric Company, Vodafone, ZenecaAstra and LucasVarity. The significance of this activity for Britain's economic future — and for Britain's role in the world — could exceed such endlessly debated issues as the strength of sterling or the consequences of staying outside European economic and monetary union.

The merger between BAe and GEC-Marconi has attracted a good deal of public attention. But this has focused largely on the political implications, especially for Britain's relationship with Europe. It is said, for example, that Tony Blair is furious about the way that both the British firms have double-crossed their continental partners. When the merger was announced, BAe was deep in merger talks with Germany's leading defence contractor, DaimlerChrysler Aerospace (Dasa), while GEC was offering to sell Marconi to the French Government's defence electronics company, Thomson. By jilting their suitors, BAe and Marconi may have set back the cause of European industrial restructuring and even the political ambition to create a common European defence policy for years or even decades. That was the view last week from Manfred Bischoff, Dasa's chief executive, repeated by the French Government.

But instead of attacking perfidious Albion, the French and German authorities might have done better to consider why their deals fell apart. The French Government demanded that Thomson should hold 50 per cent of the shares in a joint venture with Marconi, even though Marconi would bring far more business and profits to the business than Thomson. The Paris Government also wanted the senior management of the joint venture to be entirely French.

Dasa was apparently more modest, conceding that it would account for only 40 per cent of a joint operation with BAe, but it insisted that Germany's 40 per cent share would be held as a single block, by Daimler, while Britain's 60 per cent would be dispersed among institutional investors. The result would be an effective BAe takeover by Daimler without BAe's shareholders even receiving a premium for ceding control.

So the Germans and French, far from engaging in a genuine effort to promote European-wide restructuring, were trying to protect their flagging national champions by seizing control of two highly successful British companies through political pressure, instead of commercial and financial competition.

What has been really heartening about the recent spate of big industrial restructurings announced in the City is that so many have failed. British companies seem finally to have acquired enough self-confidence to call the bluff of foreign bidders such as Dasa and Thomson. Instead of seeing themselves as passive victims of international competition, they have found the courage to try to initiate and even to dominate the global restructuring of their industries. They have been willing to take financial risks to keep managerial control of their businesses. And, perhaps most surprisingly, they have found some encouragement among their institutional shareholders. BAe has suffered a modest share price fall since rejecting the Dasa offer, but few City institutions or commentators argue that the decision was wrong.

On the contrary, Britain's investors, as well as some of the better industrial managers, seem to be developing a taste for bolder international strategies. In the record-breaking takeovers of AirTouch and Amoco, for example, British shareholders enthusiastically supported the decisions of Vodafone and BP managers to issue vast numbers of new shares. A few years ago, such share issues might well have provoked accusations from shareholders that their interests were being diluted and that managers were engaged in pointless empire-building to the detriment of shareholder value. Even in the big takeover battle now preoccupying the City — the battle for LucasVarity — British shareholders seem willing to sell to American firms, but only on terms that are likely to leave them with majority control of the combined groups.

Of course, some of the recent City bids and deals may turn out to be unjustified. No doubt several will disappoint investors and some may produce industrial disasters. And in the long run it may be almost impossible for British companies to remain globally competitive in high-tech industries without more of the government support for research and development enjoyed by their rivals in Germany, France, Japan and the United States. But the newfound willingness of the City to back British industrial companies does not just stem from bull market euphoria or misplaced national pride. It is based on a serious assessment of economic realities — Britain is now a far more successful manufacturing country, especially in high-tech industries, than is generally recognised.

How many readers know, for example, that Vodafone's takeover of AirTouch will make Britain the home of the biggest telecommunications company outside the United States, with a market value exceeding that of Deutsche Telecom and France Telecom combined? Or that BAe's purchase of GEC-Marconi will create the world's third largest aerospace and defence company and the only such business of global significance outside America? Or that BP's takeover of Amoco will make Britain the main base for two of the world's top three energy companies? Or that, after the merger of Zeneca with Sweden's Astra, three of the world's top six pharmaceutical companies are based in Britain and have chosen to use the dollar, rather than the euro, as their unit of account?

Britain is still the home of more large industrial companies than any other European country (including Germany). Britain still exports a higher proportion of its gross domestic product than any other G7 country. And, most importantly, British firms are strongly represented in the industries of the future. As shown in the Government's recent *Competitiveness White Paper*, Britain has recently enjoyed unusually strong growth in high-technology exports. The share of high-tech exports in total exports has been higher in Britain than in France in four of the past five years and has consistently been much higher than in Germany or Italy throughout the past decade. Britain's overseas earnings from royalties and licence fees have been much higher than those of any other European country.

Such statistics conflict with the widespread impression that Britain is sliding ineluctably down the world industrial league, towards a position where it will be able to compete only with relatively backward Asian countries on the basis of harsh working conditions and cheap labour. This unjustified gloom has long been promoted in continental Europe by politicians anxious to resist pressures for what they see as British-style deregulation and in Britain by politicians anxious to promote what they see as European-style industrial interventionism.

But finally some British managers, with the backing of their institutional shareholders, seem to recognise the strength of their companies and they are trying to capitalise on this strength to secure positions of global leadership in industries of the future. The success or failure of these companies in making the quantum leap from operating on a national or European scale to running truly global businesses will have far more impact on Britain's industrial future than the troubles at Rover in Longbridge or another survey of hand-wringing from the CBI.

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'The public seem to expect their politicians to disinfect the nation's kitchen surfaces'

George Bridges

The war against campylobacter, salmonella and new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease is being fought with the most powerful weapon this Government can think of — a new quango. Yesterday saw the emergence of a hit squad to tackle the scourge of failing sandwiches, the Food Standards Agency. Yet there is an even greater peril to public safety than dodgy prawns. It is, of course, our baths.

Thirty-five people, aged between 15 and 64, died in 1996 from drowning in their tubs. Thirty-four died from food poisoning. If the Government is so worried about people's health and safety, surely Frank Dobson should consider a new BSE — a Bath Standards Executive? The bath chain, like the food chain, needs regulation. A £100 million budget, a levy on all bath and shower manufacturers and retailers, a few hundred scientists, and Frank might be able to save thirty-five people. Who could possibly accuse him of pouring money down the plughole?

There is no appetite for a new BSE because the bath scare has yet to happen. The public think the risk from dying after eating a hamburger is greater than from taking to their tub. But imagine if a sudden spate of watery deaths caught the headlines. The clamour would arise that something should be done. And so the BSE would be born.

At the end of the second millennium, there remains a mistaken belief that science can and should be used to eliminate risk. Politicians and voters share the blame. People refuse to accept that freezers and microwaves, cook-chill meals and fast-food joints are not just the symbols of an affluent society, but ideal homes for germs. They believe that technology can banish all micro-organisms. When that fails, they expect politicians to disinfect the nation's kitchen surfaces.

According to Dr Barrie Craven of the University of Northumbria, and Christine E. Johnson, the aim of politicians "should be not to eliminate the poisoning but to establish an environment that results in an acceptable level of food poisoning". Indeed. But try finding a Health Minister brave enough to go on the news and say that twenty deaths from food poisoning is an "acceptable" balance of risk. How much safer to spurt out the most recent expert advice, form a quango and draw up new regulations.

The Food Standards Agency will be the apotheosis of this nannying mentality, strangling the whole food industry with the State's apron strings. If the threat of food poisoning diminishes, this will be used to justify regulation. But if there are new scares, they will not be seen as evidence of the futility of spending millions trying to eliminate risk. They will be used to justify even more spending and more safeguards. Food safety regulations should be like a good steak: lean and simple .

The theory underpinning this whole enterprise is wearily familiar: scientists, experts and officials know more than consumers, and politicians must act on their advice. But the reality is far messier. Imagine you were the scientist who discovered that anyone who eats beef on the bone might contract CJD. You have two options. Reasoning that the risk of death by eating beef on the bone is one in a billion, compared to the one in ten million chance of being hit by lightning, you could file it under "fascinating but not really alarming". But in so doing, you stand accused of a cover-up. You can, of course, shift responsibility on to your political master. He will have to decide whether to keep things in proportion, but risk losing his job for covering matters up. Or he could spark a health scare.

The crude mixing of politics and science has proved toxic. The BSE crisis, like so many other scares, suffered from the uncertainty of the science. The public hysteria ran almost its entire course without any scientific proof that there was anything to be alarmed about. Yet it spawned the new agency, a pedestal on which the experts are to be placed to terrify us all. Politicians don't dare to trust people. Nor do they have the courage to admit that, no matter how much molly-coddling their quangos inflict on us, living is a risky business.

Perhaps we should spend all day lying in bed or in a chair. But even that is more dangerous than eating an egg: In one year, 83 people died falling out of their divan or off their seats.

Had ministers been braver, they would have taken a leaf out of the Book of Leviticus. Moses, the first food standards officer, had the right approach: tell people that God orders them to wash their hands before meals, and not to eat swine. If they didn't obey the Almighty, they would suffer from more than just a gippy tummy. But the choice was theirs.

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THE TIMES DIARY

Don't call us

IT IS my sad duty to inform Sir Jocelyn Stevens that he is finished. The chairman of English Heritage has so offended John Prescott that he is not to be granted another term when the post comes up for renewal next year. The deputy PM thinks Stevens tried to force his hand by saying that an ambitious modernist ashtray near Tower Bridge designed by Sir Norman Foster was the only possible HQ for London's mayor. Awkwardly, Will Alsop then withdrew the only alternative.

Gordon Brown resented being bounced into a decision, so Lord St John of Fawsley, head of the Royal Fine Art Commission, persuaded Alsop to revive his scheme. Ministers are unimpressed, however, by Steven's unsubtle insistence that Chris Smith is the "best Culture Secretary ever".

● *I DROPPED by Brompton Oratory and knocked into Jennifer Paterson, jammed into a booth selling knick-knacks. One slab of the* Fat Ladies, *the TV cook looked cosy squeezed between rosaries, candles and recipes on how to achieve an after life.*

French leave

THE delightful dowager Lady Rothermere is to move to New York to take advantage of her green card, I am distressed to learn. Maiko, pictured with her late husband who

she met in a winebar, was left a substantial wodge from the peer's personal fortune in Paris.

Sadly, France has diverted a large slice under its forced inheritance rules whereby two thirds go to the children — even though they have been well looked after in Britain. I am sure his family, compassionate sorts, will step in.

● *PETER LILLEY, showing that he is a veteran of the gong ceremony circuit, on the Whitbread Book Awards: "A combination of lit. crit. and the Eurovision Song Contest."*

Dosh for dirt

PECULIAR that eliciting a few tawdry marriage secrets can make a career. Take Martin Bashir, who interviewed the late Diana, Princess of Wales. I gather that the new *Sixty Minutes* dirt-digger is to be paid £500,000 over two years, a quarter of the reporting budget.

This has caused a frisson between two brothers in charge of ITV's current affairs programme, to be presented by Trevor McDonald. Steve Anderson, head of News and Current Affairs, and Jeff, editor of the new programme, are getting on swimmingly after Steve went over his brother's head to hire Bashir.

● *A CHALLENGE to William Hague? Lord Feldman has thrown a dinner for Iain Duncan Smith, the thinking man's Lord Tebbit. As well as providing a passable table, the former chairman of the National Union suggests an insurance policy against something "quite dreadful" happening to William.*

One of us?

"MR BLAIR was glad to read your kind words about Harry Greenway, MP, whom I understand has made a very good impression on you," reads a letter from Downing Street. "It is heartening to hear good reports about Labour MPs who work so hard for their constituents." True, except Greenway was a Tory MP.

● *IT WAS hardly bottoms up for James Bond, aka Pierce Brosnan, 47, during a recent film shoot. A pert "bum double", 16 years his junior, was hired.*

JASPER GERARD

KILLING RAGE

A murder mocks hopes of peace in Ireland

Yesterday the House of Commons debated, in suitably grave terms, the descent into gangsterism of part of the United Kingdom. Although Sinn Fein has two elected members of the House, they have not taken their seats, and could take no part in the debate. But their constituency still made its views clear in the most chilling terms. On the morning of the debate a corpse was found by a Newry roadside, the mutilated body of the IRA informer Eamon Collins. He had dared to expose his former comrades in all their thuggishness. His killing is regrettable, terrible, evidence, as if it were needed, of his warning. Militant republicanism is in no mood to heed the appeals to basic morality made in the Commons yesterday. Its answer to debate has proved to be the gun.

Eamon Collins is only the latest, most horrific, casualty of Ulster's continuing violence. It had been hoped, not least by this newspaper, that the Good Friday agreement signalled terror's eclipse. But the hopes which attended that agreement, and which we nurture still, are imperilled by the Government's apparent acquiescence in the face of persistent violence.

In the Commons yesterday the Prime Minister calmly, and regretfully, pointed out that violent intimidation had occurred during a previous IRA ceasefire and the last Government had been prepared, nevertheless, to treat the ceasefire as intact in the interests of advancing the peace process. There may have been room to criticise the last Government for too great a forbearance towards terrorism, but it was at least possible to argue that leniency was justified on the road to agreement. Blind eyes might be turned for the sake of "luring the men of violence towards peace".

But now there is a settlement. And still no peace. There are embryo cross-border bodies, a shadow assembly and potential places for Sinn Fein on a new executive. Why is there, then, still tolerance of terror? If, after yielding so much, the Government still does not respond with vigour to violence then the paramilitaries will conclude there is nothing to be lost, and much perhaps to be gained, by continuing their campaign of intimidation.

Republican terrorists not only scent weakness; they perceive advances, however matters develop. As William Hague pointed out yesterday, if matters go on as they are more convicted terrorists will walk free while more innocent citizens will never walk again. And, all the while, the paramilitaries' stockpiles of arms remain at the ready. Mr Blair may believe that the only way to keep the agreement alive is to decline to push the IRA too far. But if the IRA is not compelled to decommission its weapons, then democrats will have been pushed beyond endurance.

David Trimble, Ulster's First-Minister-designate, cannot be expected to join an executive whose members include the sponsors of terror. The IRA knows that Mr Trimble's refusal would trigger the collapse of the agreement, but that is a result they do not fear. They calculate Unionism will be held responsible, and any alternative to the failed agreement will be a form of joint Dublin and London rule in Ulster which will underline their perception of the Province's ungovernability, and advance their agenda of destabilising the Union.

The Government has punished paramilitaries before for flagrant breaches of their ceasefires. It must do so again. The means, a moratorium on prisoner releases, are at hand. Unless ministers act, there will be many more families who will join Eamon Collins's in desperate, and unassuaged, grief.

THE ADEN LINK

Fighting terrorism abroad means cracking down at home

The arrest of three more Britons in Yemen yesterday on terrorism charges on the day when the trial of five others began in Aden has drawn Britain further into the murky politics of southern Arabia. After the murder of British tourists kidnapped by Islamic militants after Christmas, the Government pressed hard for a full and swift investigation. Within days this revealed an unexpected and embarrassing link back to Britain: five British passport-holders were arrested on charges of plotting attacks on British targets in Yemen, and militant Islamic activists at Finsbury Park mosque appeared to be the crucial link between the kidnappers and the arrested Britons.

The Government is torn between diplomatic imperatives: to ensure the capture and sentencing of those responsible for the December killings while protecting the rights of the five men whose implication appears, on preliminary evidence, to be inescapable. This second duty has been given added urgency by the very plausible reports that the five men have been tortured in custody and by the accusations from their families that less has been done for them than would have been for white-skinned Christian British citizens.

There should be no contradiction between these priorities. The Yemenis are fully within their rights to arrest anyone suspected of plotting sabotage or stirring up trouble in terrorist training camps: indeed, this is what all governments committed to the fight against terrorism would insist they should do. Universal norms of justice demand clear charges, a properly prepared trial and due access by defendants who are foreigners to consular advice and legal representation. Here the Yemenis appear to be on shakier ground. Charges were slow, defence counsel has been given only two days to produce witnesses and the men insisted in court that they had been tortured. Beatings may be routine for Yemeni defendants in a country dominated by tribal custom; that does not excuse ill-treatment, forced confessions and torture. Britain should insist on an independent medical examination.

Yemen has now demanded the extradition of Abu Hamza al-Masri, the imam of Finsbury Park mosque who has made no secret of his wish to see the overthrow of the government in Sanaa. He has much to answer for. Allegations that he spoke to the kidnappers before the shooting, the involvement of his stepson and the display of cassettes made by his supporters among the equipment said to have been taken from the defendants all point to a role that could be grounds for prosecution.

Extradition may be awkward. There is no treaty with Yemen, and the conditions of custody could persuade an extradition court that he would not receive a fair trial. But the Government has a new option. New anti-terrorist legislation makes conspiracy to commit terrorism overseas a crime in Britain. Significantly, Derek Fatchett, while not naming Mr Hamza, insisted in the Gulf two days ago that the Government would use these new laws to prosecute where necessary. Yemen should submit whatever evidence it has; the police and MI5 may have evidence of their own. The events at Finsbury mosque appear repellent and unacceptable. If they are indeed also criminal, those responsible should be prosecuted forthwith. Fighting terrorism abroad means cracking down on the scourge at home as well.

READY-WRAPPED POLL TAX

The funding of the Food Standards Agency could be its ruin

The Government's Bill creating a new Food Standards Agency had no reason to be controversial. Salmonella outbreaks, BSE and some spectacular cases of E. coli food poisoning have seriously shaken public confidence. BSE, in particular, confirmed the need for an independent body, immune to producer pressures. The decision to take the policing of food safety out of the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) has universal support. Amazingly, the Government has contrived to convert this simple passport to popularity into a complicated document that will rightly be fiercely contested.

The first flaw in this Bill is that it does not, in fact, take MAFF entirely out of the picture. The FSA's responsibilities risk being too broad, including "healthy eating" rather than food safety alone, and too narrow. Crucially, they do not extend right through the food chain, but only from farmgate to front door. Many food poisoning incidents originate on farms, which will continue to be MAFF territory.

The second is that, far from being visibly separate from the food production industry, the FSA is to be linked to it by the closest possible tie — that of money. Some £54 million a year, just over half its anticipated costs, will be funded through an industry-wide levy. The impost inevitably links the FSA to those it exists to monitor. That is not what the public wants.

The most egregious mistake of all is the divisive way in which this unwise form of indirect tax is to be raised. Every food outlet, from the tiniest store in remote villages to the bulkiest hypermarket suburbia can boast, is to pay the same, a flat £90 a year. This is a monstrous injustice; why should small businesses on tight profit margins pay the same as supermarket chains, which would barely register the sum on their turnover sheets?

The Government's contention that the levy should be the same for all because the risks generated are equal offends common sense. Corner shops for whom food is only marginal to their sales may abandon that part of their business. The policy sits ill with ministers' strictures on unbridled hypermarket development and their ambitions to preserve the fabric of towns; and even less well with job-creation. The recent Competitiveness White Paper underlines the importance of small businesses as engines of growth. Sandwich outlets help relatively unskilled people to enter or return to the labour market. The levy will be a disincentive for such small employers.

It is also a political mistake. As the Tories learnt to their cost, anything that looks to most people like a poll tax will be so massively resented that, even if it is dropped an aura of unfairness will linger. If the FSA is vital to public health, then it is important enough to be funded by taxpayers, not producers. The sooner ministers accept that, the less they risk their basically good product turning rancid before it reaches the counter.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Ethics of the trade in weapons of war

From Lord Alton of Liverpool

Sir, Nicholas Prest, Chairman of Alvis (letter, January 21), accuses Matthew Parris of nonsense, immorality and pacifism for questioning the Government's arms trade policies.

There is a world of difference between manufacturing the means of defence for a democratically elected government and selling arms to totalitarian governments which violate human rights.

In the case of Indonesia alone, the British Government has issued 60 new licences to companies selling arms since the last general election. On coming to office, it renewed 21,000 existing arms export licences. Not only are there obvious issues of transparency here; there is also the small question of the Government's ethical policy.

Mr Prest's own company has sold armoured vehicles and tanks to the Indonesians. The Indonesian Defence Attaché in London, Colonel Halim, has admitted that UK-manufactured military equipment had been used in East Timor, where 200,000 people are estimated to have died at the hands of Indonesian forces.

If Indonesia does not fall foul of the Government's ethical policy and its strictures that arms should not be sold to countries which practise external oppression or internal repression, which countries will?

There are a range of other reasons for at least questioning arms deals such as Eurofighter. The cost of researching, designing and building this plane has been put at £15 billion — about £1 million per job. Alan Clark, MP, a noted military historian, put it well when he said: "We must find less extravagant ways of paying people to make buckets with holes in them."

Yours faithfully,
DAVID ALTON,
House of Lords.
January 21.

From Mr Trevor Woolston

Sir, We are all indebted to Matthew Parris for raising the old rallying cry, "Swords into ploughshares": it has become curiously muted in prosperous industrial countries in recent years.

Are we all being moulded into double standards? Ban handguns, but build up our capacity to make mass killing acceptable? Condemn terrorism, but indulge in terrorist bombing of any nation which does not bow to big-power pressure?

Matthew Parris is certainly right. The arms trade is morally wrong and we have yet to learn better ways of building peace. On our present showing, we will certainly be thought mad by any future wise men who, somehow, manage to survive.

Yours sincerely,
TREVOR WOOLSTON,
East Mill House,
Grinton, Richmond,
North Yorkshire DL11 6HL.
January 18.

Candour on Viagra

From Professor Richard Green

Sir, When Dr Thomas Stuttaford and I were medical students, shame prevented patients from confessing to a sexual problem and embarrassment prevented patients and family from admitting that they had cancer. A man in life did not talk publicly of his impotence and in death his obituary euphemistically referred to "a long illness". That is why Dr Stuttaford's account (January 22) of his prostate cancer surgery and its effect on his sexuality, whimsically titled "I might just as well swallow a Smartie as take Viagra", is so refreshingly candid.

With his self-disclosure, Dr Stuttaford condemns the Health Secretary's cynicism in permitting NHS prescriptions for the anti-impotence drug only for patients with a severely disrupted nerve or blood supply, for whom it probably won't work, and who therefore won't return for a refill.

Whatever the merits of this governmental strategy to contain NHS costs, Dr Stuttaford is to be commended for his candour as a model for his patients and the public.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD GREEN
(Consultant psychiatrist),
Imperial College School of Medicine,
Charing Cross Hospital, W6 8RF.
January 22.

Treatment for all?

From Dr Fiona Cornish

Sir, Has the time come for the generosity offered to foreign students and academics for NHS treatment to end?

In no other country would you expect free GP and hospital treatment, merely by being registered for a university course. Many students are baffled by this bizarre generosity and ask where to pay. The answer is that they are not allowed to.

Frank Dobson's Viagra debate has finally alerted the public to the question of rationing; should the British taxpayer fund, for example, renal dialysis or cardiac surgery for students or academic visitors from abroad?

Yours faithfully,
FIONA CORNISH,
Newnham Walk Surgery,
Wordsworth Grove,
Cambridge CB3 9HS.
January 22.

Snape's fears of 'quiet' air traffic

From Canon John Giles

Sir, The northeast end of the Bentwaters runway (which can and will take large commercial jets under the present proposals) is less than three miles from the Snape Maltings Concert Hall (letters, January 21 and 26). The runway points a mere 19 degrees away from a direct line over the Maltings. Planes will be taking off or landing as close as that. As far as the timing of flights is concerned so as not to interfere with music and recordings, Aldeburgh Productions has received as yet no acceptable concessions that would allow the two operations to coexist.

I remember a course for clergy held in Windsor, six miles from Heathrow, where lectures were repeatedly interrupted by aircraft noise. With a window open in hot weather, lecturers had to stop speaking for ten seconds or more before they could be heard again.

Mr Yann Borgstedt, the Project Manager for the proposed revitalised Bentwater Airport, says in his letter today that aircraft noise "will hardly be heard at the Maltings above the background noise of daily life". But the point about the Maltings is that there truly is virtually no background noise of daily life. Outside the hall the birds, insects, the very reeds of the Alde estuary are all that can be heard.

It is a unique home and setting for music. If that is wrecked, the artists drawn here will dwindle. Commercialism will have won one more battle at the expense of quality of life.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN GILES,
25 The Terrace, Aldeburgh, IP15 5HJ.
January 26.

From Mrs Tricia Maguire

Sir, I would dispute the bland assurances given by Messrs Yann Borgstedt and Lewis Benjamin in their letters today.

There were, I recollect, constant and difficult negotiations during the 1970s and 80s between the Aldeburgh Festival (later Foundation) and the USAF bases at Bentwaters and Woodbridge about their flights. Timings were made to avoid concerts. Benjamin Britten was forced to move miles away in order to be able to compose.

I cannot be persuaded that this call of commerce in ten years' time is going to be fulfilled by using "quiet aircraft", timetabling flights to avoid all those many hours during which the Maltings and the Britten-Peers School for Advanced Musical Studies are in use, or ensuring that flight paths remain three miles away.

Yours,
TRICIA MAGUIRE,
Manor Farm,
Benhall Green,
Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 1HN.
January 26.

From Mr Adrian Palmer

Sir, If Mr Borgstedt's regenerated airport will only generate ten commercial flights a day in ten years' time, yet create 2,000 local jobs, is it a viable proposition?

Yours faithfully,
ADRIAN PALMER,
Prospect House,
Shilling Street,
Lavenham, Sudbury CO10 9RH.
January 26.

Dowsing rods

From Mr Ian R. M. Chaston

Sir, I must disagree with Nigel Hawkes (Science Briefing, January 20) that there is "no plausible mechanism" to explain dowsing.

Most people are sensitive to variations in local electromagnetic fields, such as exist in the presence of flowing streams of water, power cables, etc. These variations interfere with the electric signals along the neurons between the hands holding the dowsing rods, which communicate to the brain and back to the muscles that keep the rods in position.

This imbalance makes it difficult for such people to hold the rods steady: the more they try the more their muscles will twist the rods. This movement then reveals the presence of this field variation.

Anyone who wishes to test their natural ability should experiment with the simple rods used by house repairers to indicate the presence of hidden pipes and cables. These were in general use before the advent of today's less subjective, electronic instruments.

Yours faithfully,
IAN CHASTON
(Consulting metallurgist),
Flat 2, The Old Police Station,
19 Coldharbour, E14 9NS.
January 20.

'Presumed consent'

From Dr Colin G. Fink

Sir, I have a great respect for the work of Professor Margaret Esiri (letter, January 20) and I have no worry about a change in the law governing "presumed consent" of organ donors in the hands of her and her fellow signatories. It is the rest of my medical colleagues who give me cause for concern.

A number of them have expressed an interest in seeing what makes me tick. I fear that the temptation to satisfy their curiosity may exceed their sometimes fragile grip on medical ethics and that they may not wait for as long as I would wish.

Prospective patients may share my concerns.

Yours faithfully,
COLIN FINK
(Clinical virologist and
general practitioner),
Micropathology Ltd,
Vincent Drive,
Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2SQ.
January 20.

From Mr Philip Rossdale

Sir, We do not call those from whom property is stolen "donors", but the occasions ranking as theft would be made less frequent by presumed consent to the removal of an individual's property when desperately needed by someone else.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP ROSSDALE,
10 Old Square,
Lincoln's Inn, WC2A 3SU.
January 21.

Wigs for judges

From His Honour Patrick Halnan

Sir, A wig is wonderfully warm in a cold court (letters, January 20).

Yours truly,
PATRICK HALNAN,
33 Rotherwick Way,
Cambridge CB1 8RX.
January 20.

Letters may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: *letters@the-times.co.uk*

Wind turbines

From Mr T. D. Short

Sir, I disagree with Mr John Campbell, QC (letter, January 19), that wind turbines are "useless". They create thousands of megawatts of electricity each year and save untold tonnes of carbon dioxide from being pumped into the atmosphere.

Carbon dioxide will always be produced in one form or another by gas or coal-fired power plants — that is inescapable. But we can do something about it now, preventing the need for future treatment.

To dismiss wind farms because of their (arguable) adverse effect on the landscape is short-termism of the worst kind. Wind turbines do work. They produce "clean" and "green" electricity at a price that is commercially viable and at no cost to our futures. Maybe the current proportion is negligible compared to demand; the usual commercial response to such a situation is not to cut off supply entirely, but to provide more.

Yours faithfully,
T. SHORT,
Energy Group,
Department of Engineering,
University of Reading,
Whiteknights, PO Box 225,
Reading, Berkshire RG6 6AY.
t.d.short@reading.ac.uk
January 21.

The Monty style

From Mr Ralph Barnes

Sir, Recent references to Field Marshal Montgomery (letters, January 18 and 22) have reminded me of an experience when I was teaching in the early 1960s.

I took a party of boys to visit Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. When we were walking along Whitehall I spotted Monty leaving a saloon car and walking towards the War Office. I called to my pupils to run with me towards him.

We arrived in time at the entrance and I stood to attention saluted and stated my rank, name and number. He looked at each boy and pointing a finger he uttered: "Haircut; haircut; haircut."

Yours truly,
RALPH BARNES,
81 Windsor Court,
Chase Side, Southgate, N14 5HT.
Jafiuary 22.

Mixed foods

From Dr Carl James

Sir, Contrary to the inset accompanying your report on cost-cutting in Russian chocolate factories by the increased use of carrots (January 23), the word marmalade does not "derive from the Portuguese name for preserve made from carrots". The Portuguese for carrot is *cenoura*.

A more likely etymology for marmalade is that it derives from the Portuguese *marmelo* meaning quince (*Pyrus cydonia*), itself originating either in Arabic or in Greek *melimelon* (honey apple). Portuguese *marmelada* is quite simply quince jelly.

The only association I can construe between the word *marmelada* and cost-cutting is its use in Brazilian football slang for a fixed or rigged game.

Yours faithfully,
CARL JAMES,
University of Wales,
Linguistics Department,
Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2DG.
January 25.

Business letters, page 31

Can schools police their absentees?

From Mr Colin Maclean Campbell

Sir, Your leading article, "Safe to school" (January 23), fails to distinguish between absent children and missing children. Absentees are not necessarily missing.

The two missing ten-year-olds were only two out of 41 not present at their school that day. The remaining 39 were absent: had their parents phoned to advise the school, it would have been alerted that the two were unaccounted for and immediate action could have been taken.

A parent can always find a phone. A teacher cannot always find a parent.

Yours faithfully,
COLIN MACLEAN CAMPBELL,
Regent House, 23 Regent Terrace,
Edinburgh EH7 5BS.
colincampbell@compuserve.com
January 23.

From Mr Colin Clayton

Sir, So now we know *The Times*'s considered opinion as to how a teacher should spend the first hour of the school day: not running an assembly or teaching the children who have answered their names on the register, but telephoning the parents of those who haven't, on the off-chance they may be at home.

In a flu epidemic with any luck this should take till lunchtime. As for the children who attend, no doubt they could play with their computers.

Yours faithfully,
COLIN CLAYTON,
Davian, Main Road,
Higher Foxdale, Isle of Man.
claytons@mcb.net
January 23.

From Professor Sir Bryan Thwaites

Sir, Your leading article asks "Are teachers aware of their responsibility for ensuring that their pupils are at school?" And how, pray, do you expect them to exercise this responsibility? By collecting each child one-by-one from its home?

No: parents, and only parents, can ensure that their children are delivered safely to the school gates.

Yours faithfully,
BRYAN THWAITES,
Milnthorpe, Winchester SO22 4NF.
January 23.

Millennium Bart

From Eur Ing Michael Pinder

Sir, We are just as disfunctional as Bart Simpson (letter from Mr Morley Halse, January 20), even though we have more digits to count on. We count years in millenniums, centuries and decades, like the ancient Egyptians, but we do not use our ten digits for counting days or dividing the days in the year.

A ten-day week would allow most jobs to be shared and eliminate unemployment. A decimal day would prevent the confusion caused by using 12 or 24-hour clocks. The global age, date and time at the millennium could be shown thus: 000.000.000 and this decimal time system would have zapped all the millennium bugs.

Here's to the next Time,
MICHAEL PINDER
(President),
The Decimal Time Society,
6 Hamble Close, Warsash,
Hampshire SO31 9GT.
January 20.

Orchestra finances

From Mr Terence Earley

Sir, Perhaps one should not be surprised that Raymond Gubbay rushes to the defence of British orchestras (letter, January 25), since as an impresario he creams off their popular, money-making concerts.

This leaves them with their more important music-making which attracts Arts Council subsidy, from which he indirectly benefits since their subsidies keep them in existence.

Yours truly,
TERENCE EARLEY,
9/74 Elm Park Gardens,
London SW10 9PD.
January 25.

Golden years

From Mr David Townley

Sir, The onset of middle age has nothing to do with chronological age (letters, January 5, 12, 19, 26). It starts when you look forward to a dull evening.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID TOWNLEY,
92 Fir Tree Road,
Banstead, Surrey SM7 1NQ.
January 26.

From Mr David Schofield

Sir, On the subject of late 20th-century middle age, perhaps my favourite adage (and certainly the one I quote most often) is "Old enough to know better, young enough not to care."

I remain determined to grow old disgracefully.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID SCHOFIELD,
Gwysfa, Conwy Old Road,
Penmaenmawr,
Borough of Conwy LL34 6YF.
January 26.

COURT CIRCULAR

ST JAMES'S PALACE
January 27: The Prince of Wales was represented by Lieutenant-General Sir Peter Graham, late Gordon Highlanders, at the Funeral of Captain George Watson, late Gordon Highlanders, at Udny Green Church, Aberdeenshire, today.

His Royal Highness was represented by Colonel Robert ffrench Blake at a Memorial Service for Mr Albert Abela at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm Street, Mayfair, today.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
January 27: The Princess Royal, President of the Patrons, Crime Concern, this morning attended the "Action on Women's Safety" Conference at Ellis Building, Lancashire Constabulary Headquarters, Hutton, Lancashire, and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Lancashire (The Lord Shuttleworth).

Her Royal Highness, President, The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, this afternoon attended a Luncheon at Trafford Town Hall, Talbot Road, Stretford, Greater Manchester, with carers and staff from the Trafford Carers Centre and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater Manchester (Colonel John Timmins).

The Princess Royal, Patron, The Butler Trust, afterwards visited HM Prison Manchester, Southall Street, Manchester.

Her Royal Highness, Colonel-in-Chief, The Royal Logistic Corps, later opened the new Territorial Army Centre at Haldane Barracks, Haldane Road, Salford, Greater Manchester.

The Princess Royal, Past President, The Chartered Institute of Transport, this evening attended the North Western Section Annual Dinner at The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester.

Today's royal engagements

The Princess Royal, as patron Victim Support Scotland, will launch the Victim Support City of Glasgow service at 10 Jocelyn Square, Glasgow, at 11.00; will visit the Glasgow University Media Group at the Mass Media Unit, 61 Southpark Avenue, at 12.45; and will open the Strathclyde University's Institute for Biomedical Sciences, 27 Taylor Street, at 3.00. Later she will attend a dinner given by the City Council at the Banqueting Hall, City Chambers at 7.00, to receive an award for her significant contribution to Glasgow and her encouragement to organisations supporting disadvantaged individuals.

Macmillan Cancer Relief

Macmillan Cancer Relief announces the appointment of Sir Kenneth Calman, former Chief Medical Officer, to the board. Four other appointments were also made: Dame Gillian Oliver, Mrs Roddy Petley, Miss Sue Kirk and Mr David Paton.

Meeting

Royal Institute of International Affairs
The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic was the speaker at a meeting of the Royal Institute of International Affairs held yesterday at Chatham House. Mr Peter Horborne presided.

Birthdays today

Mr M.J. Ainsworth, chief executive, Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators, 52; Mr Alan Alda, actor, 63; Mr Mikhail Baryshnikov, ballet dancer and actor, 51; Mrs Valerie Bragg, Principal, City Technology College, Kingshurst, Birmingham, 52; Miss Enid Castle, former Principal, Cheltenham Ladies' College, 63; Sir Oliver Chesterton, chartered surveyor, 86; Mr John Edmonds, trade unionist, 55; Mr M.G. Falcon, former chairman, Norwich Union Insurance Group, 71; Mr Glyn Ford, MEP, 49; Sir Anthony Garner, former director of organisation, Conservative Central Office, 72.

Professor Sir Henry Harris, FRS, former Regius Professor of Medicine, Oxford University, 74; Mr J.D. Hughes, former Principal, Ruskin College, Oxford, 72; Mr Bill Jordan, trade unionist, 63; Sir Timothy Kitson, former MP, 68; the Rev David Morris, MEP, 69; Major-General Martin Sinnatt, former secretary, Kennel Club, 71; Sir Trevor Skeet, former MP, 81; Professor John Tavener, composer, 55; Mr David Thompson, former chairman, Gestetner Holdings, 67; the Rev B.R. White, former Principal, Regent's Park College, Oxford, 65; the Very Rev James Whyte, former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 79; Lord Windlesham, 67.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: King Henry VII, reigned 1485-1509, Pembroke Castle, 1457; John Baskerville, typographer and printer, Worcester, 1706; Charles George Gordon, general, London, 1833; Sir Henry Stanley, explorer and journalist, Denbigh, 1841; William Seward Burroughs, pioneer of adding machines, New York, 1855; Colette, writer, St-Sauveur-en-Puisaye, 1873; Auguste Piccard, physicist, sea and stratosphere explorer, Basle, 1884; Artur Rubinstein, pianist, Lodz, Poland, 1887; Jackson Pollock, Expressionist painter, Cody, Wyoming, 1912; Harry Corbett, puppeteer and entertainer, Bradford, Yorkshire, 1918.

DEATHS: Charlemagne, Holy Roman Emperor 800-814, Aachen, Germany, 814; King Henry VIII, reigned 1509-47, Greenwich, 1547; Sir Francis Drake, navigator and pirate, Porto Bello, West Indies, 1596; Sir Thomas Bodley, diplomat and founder of the Bodleian Library in Oxford, London, 1612; William Burke, body-snatcher, executed in Edinburgh, 1829; William Butler Yeats, poet and dramatist, Nobel laureate 1923, Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, 1939; Billy Fury, singer, London, 1983.

Edward VI acceded to the throne, 1547.

The American space shuttle Challenger exploded shortly after lift-off from Cape Canaveral, killing five men and two women, 1986.

Memorial services

Mr Albert P. Abela
The Prince of Wales was represented by Colonel Robert ffrench Blake at a requiem mass in thanksgiving for the life of Mr Albert Abela, international businessman, held yesterday at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm Street, London W1. Father Michael O'Halloran and Father Shafiq Abouzayd, Melkite parish priest, officiated.

The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres read the lesson. The Ambassador of Lebanon and Sir Anthony Joliffe paid tribute. Among others present were:

Mrs Abela (widow), Mr and Mrs Albert J M Abela and Mr and Mrs Marlon R P Abela (sons and daughters-in-law), other members of the family, representatives from the Diplomatic Corps, Middle East companies, academic institutions and many other friends and former colleagues.

Major-General Sir Charles Dunphie
A service of thanksgiving for the life of Major-General Sir Charles Dunphie was held yesterday at St Stephen's, Charlton Musgrove, Somerset. The Rev Kenneth Reeve officiated, assisted by the Rev Robert Widdowson.

Brigadier Christopher Dunphie, son, read the lesson and Mr Nicholas Baker, Mr Nigel Baker and Captain Charles Dunphie, grandsons, gave readings. Lady Dunphie, widow, other members of the family, friends and former colleagues were among those present.

Luncheons

Carlton Club
Miss Ann Widdecombe, Shadow Secretary of State for Health, was the guest of honour and speaker at a luncheon of the Political Committee of the Carlton Club held yesterday at the club. Mr Simon Mabey, Chairman of the Political Committee, and Dr Cyril Nemeth also spoke.

Carmen's Company
The annual charity luncheon of the Carmen's Company was held yesterday at Painters' Hall. Mr J.A.T. Saywell, Master, presided, assisted by Mr J.M. Silbermann, Senior Warden, and Mr B.H. Owen, Junior Warden. Lord Ashley of Stoke, CH, President of Defeating Deafness (The Hearing Research Trust) and Mr M.L. Simpkin, Clerk to Christ's Hospital, also spoke.

Mid-Atlantic Club
The Austrian Ambassador was the guest of honour and speaker at a luncheon of the Mid-Atlantic Club held yesterday at Dartmouth House. Herr Peter von Butler, Minister at the German Embassy, presided.

Linnean Society of London

The following nominations have been made by the Linnean Society of London:

President-elect: Sir David Smith, FRS, (Wolfson College, Oxford); Botanical Secretary: Dr John Edmondson (National Museums and Galleries of Merseyside).
Foreign membership: Professor J.W. Schopf (B) USA, Professor N.N. Tzvelev (B) Russia and Professor W. Barthlott (B) Germany.
Fellows Honoris Causa: Professor Brian Gardiner and Professor Vernon Heywood.
Linnean Gold Medal for Botany: Professor Barry Tomlinson (Harvard).
Linnean Gold Medal for Zoology: Dr Quentin Bone, FRS (Plymouth).
Bicentenary medal for Biologist under 40: Dr Paul Kenrick (Natural History Museum).
H H Bloomer Award for an Amateur Biologist: Mr R H Roberts.
Jill Smythies Prize for published botanical illustration: Ms Pandora Sellars.
Irene Manton Prize for a PhD thesis in plant sciences: Dr Melissa Spielman (Oxford).

The Quack Doctor and A Chip off the Old Block

The English Cook and the Debtor

Drawing classes in ridicule

BY DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A REMARKABLE 1831 album of original watercolour drawings ridiculing the lower and middle classes indulging in a variety of pursuits has appeared on the open market.

Bernard Shapero, a leading antiquarian bookseller in London who has valued it at £18,000, described *Flights of Fancy* by John Frederick Herring the Younger as "an extremely droll collection, its Georgian humour and satiric high spirits undiminished by time".

Some 270 drawings are each captioned, often with several stanza of meticulous verse or humorous monologues. He said: "Many deal with a variety of mishaps, the fault of carelessness, drink, debt, doctors and other professionals, social pretensions, amatory inclinations, sloth and general foolishness."

There are puns — the "Ministers of Grease" — and plays on words — "a detachment" which depicts soldiers being decapitated by a cannon ball. Almost every conceivable character — from bakers to doctors, coachmen to pawnbrokers — come in for ridicule.

Flicking through the volume, which measures just 7.5 by 5 inches, Mr Shapero pointed to The Quack Doctor, a robust fellow who clearly does not knowing what he is supposed to be doing. He alighted too on The Debtor, which shows a thin figure with hand outstretched, and The Creditor, who is fat and smiling.

The volume had been in the collection of an Englishman living abroad. Why Herring created it is unclear — for his own amusement, said Mr Shapero, or to show off his talents.

Legal appointments

Miss Anne Prudence Wakefield and Mr Anthony Ronald Webb to be Circuit Judges assigned to the South Eastern Circuit.

Immigration Adjudicators
Mr Peter Ronald Moulden has been appointed a full-time Immigration Adjudicator. He has been designated a Special Adjudicator from January 29.

Major-General Michael Hugo Friend Clarke (barrister), Mrs Patricia Helen Farrall (barrister), Mr Richard Chalkley (solicitor, Tunbridge Wells) and Mr Nathan Harold Goldstein (solicitor) have been appointed full-time Immigration Adjudicators. Major-General Clark to be a Special Adjudicator from February 1, Mrs Farrall from March 1, Mr Chalkley from March 8 and Mr Goldstein from March 29.

Appointments

Mr Donald Lamont has been appointed Governor to the Falkland Islands and Commissioner for South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands in succession to Mr Richard Ralph who will be transferring to a new Diplomatic Service appointment.

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
Professor Peter Crane has been appointed Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in succession to Professor Sir Ghillean Prance, FRS, who will retire at the end of July.

University news

Cambridge
Queens' College
Elected to a Bye Fellowship from January 1: Dan Ovidiu Crisan, BSc (Bucharest), PhD (Edinburgh).

Dinners

The Speaker
The Speaker was the host at a dinner held yesterday at Speaker's House in honour of a parliamentary delegation from the Slovak Republic, led by Mr Jozef Migas, Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. Among others present were:

The Ambassador of the Slovak Republic, Baroness Gould of Potternewton, Mr John Austin, MP, Mr Tony Baldry, MP, Miss Anne Begg, MP, Mr John Cummings, MP, Mr Tam Dalyell, MP, Dr Evan Harris, MP, Mr John Hayes, MP, Miss Fiona Mactaggart, MP, Mr David Marshall, MP, Mr Michael Martin, MP, Mr Doug Naysmith, MP, Mr Dan Norris, MP, Mr James Plaskitt, MP, Mr Gordon Prentice MP, Mr John Randall, MP, Mrs Marion Roe, MP, Mr Stephen Twigg, MP, Miss Alexandra Flake, Mr Peter Harborne, Mr David Ramsay, Mr Jim Rodgers, Miss Sara Squire, Canon Robert Wright and Mr Nicolas Bevan.

Farmers' Company
Mr Christopher Pertwee, Master of the Farmers' Company, presided at a ladies dinner held last night at Plaisterers' Hall. The Right Rev John Waine, KCVO, also spoke. The Masters of the Curriers' and Arbitrators' Companies and their ladies were among the guests.

Company of Scientific Instrument Makers
Mr Ben Cross de Chavannes was the principal guest at the Achievement Award dinner of the Company of Scientific Instrument Makers held last night at Scientific Instrument Makers' Hall. Mr Brian Atherton, Master, presented the Scientific Instrument Makers' Bowen Award to Flight Lieutenant John Bauer, and the SIM-Brunel Award to Mr Jon Bartholomew.

Sir Ivor Cohen, Deputy Master, presented the company's 1998 Achievement Award to Mr Alastair Crawford, Managing Director of VG Gas. Dr Derek Cornish also spoke. Among others present were:

Group Captain Neil Gammon, the Vice-Chancellor of the City University, the Headteacher of Waverley Upper School and the Masters of the Plaisterers', Gardeners', Air Pilots & Air Navigators' and Water Conservators' Companies.

London Goodenough Trust for Overseas Graduates
Sir Christopher Wates, Chairman of the London Goodenough Trust for Overseas Graduates, and Major-General T.P. Toyne Sewell, director, received the guests at the annual Arts Faculty dinner held last night at Mecklenburgh Square. Lord Puttnam was the guest speaker.

Foundation for Science and Technology
Dr Geraldine Kenney-Wallace, Professor Brian Fender, Mr John Gray and Dr Anne Wright were the speakers at a lecture and dinner discussion of the Foundation for Science and Technology held last night at the Royal Society. Lord Jenkin of Roding, chairman of the council, presided.

Guild of Freemen of the City of London
Mr Norman Munday, Master of the Guild of Freemen of the City of London, presided at a dinner held last night at Tallow Chandlers' Hall. Brigadier W.K.L. Prosser, Clerk of the Tallow Chandlers' Company, also spoke.

Service dinner

Bristol University Air Squadron
Air Marshal Sir Anthony Bagnall, Air Member for Personnel and Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Personnel and Training Command, RAF Innsworth, was the guest of honour at the Bristol University Air Squadron's annual dinner held last night at Azimghur Barracks, Colerne. Squadron Leader J. B. Bowen, Commanding Officer, presided. Other principal guests included:

Air Vice-Marshal T W Rimmer, Air Officer Commanding and Commandant RAF College, Cranwell, Air Commodore J D Kennedy, Commandant Air Cadets, Sir John Kingman, FRS, Vice-Chancellor, Bristol University, Professor V D VandeLinde, Vice-Chancellor, Bath University and Mr A C Morris, Vice-Chancellor, University of the West of England, Bristol.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr H.J. Blosse-Lynch and Miss A.K. MacIntyre
The engagement is announced between James, son of Major and Mrs Henry Blosse-Lynch, of Headley, Berkshire, and Annabelle, daughter of Ian MacIntyre of Camus-na-h-Erie and Mrs Nigel de Marsac Godden, of Brompton Ralph, Somerset.

Mr S.P. Davies and Miss S.C. Rattee
The engagement is announced between Simon, elder son of Mr Frederick Davies, of Poole, Dorset, and Mrs Jillian Manning, of Oakham, Rutland, and Sarah, youngest daughter of Sir Donald and Lady Rattee, of Cheam, Surrey.

Mr S.J. Hickling and Miss S.C. Watson
The engagement is announced between Simon, son of Mr Peter Hickling, of Halstead, Essex, and Mrs Deanna Hickling, of Stow Bardolph, Norfolk, and Sara, daughter of Mr Charles Watson, of Bishop's Caundle, Dorset, and Mrs Robert Streeter, of Clare, Suffolk.

Mr T.B. Howells and Miss A. Barber
The engagement is announced between Thomas, son of the late Mr Christopher Howells and of Lady Graham, of Shipton-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire, and Annabel, daughter of Mr and Mrs Roger Barber, of Kingston Blount, Oxfordshire.

Mr D.G. Knoeppel and Miss S.E.J. Gilmour
The engagement is announced between Daniel, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Albert Knoeppel, of Huntington, New York, USA, and Sarah, daughter of Mr F.J.A. Gilmour, of Ardersier, Inverness, and Mrs Philip Rayner, of Edinburgh.

Mr F.L. Mertens and Miss C.T. Biles
The engagement is announced between Frank Lea, son of Dr and Mrs René Mertens, of Geel, Belgium, and Céline Thérèse, daughter of Mr and Mrs William Biles, of Sunningdale.

Mr T.A. Long and Miss P.M. Radcliffe
The engagement is announced between Toby, son of Mr Symon Long, of Ipswich, Suffolk, and Mrs Janet Young, of Bildeston, Suffolk, and Pip, daughter of Mr and Mrs Anthony Radcliffe, of The Vicarage, Langford, Gloucester.

Mr S.W. Platt and Miss M.J. Cohen
The engagement is announced between Stephen William, son of Mr and Mrs Peter Platt, of Valkenburg, The Netherlands, and Melanie Jane, daughter of Mr and Mrs Stanley Cohen, of St Lawrence, Jersey, Channel Islands.

Mr G.C. Stephenson and Miss M.C. Wagg
The engagement is announced between Guy, eldest son of Mr Tim Stephenson, of Amport, Hampshire, and Mrs Nerena Stephenson, of Didmarton, Gloucestershire, and Marina, daughter of Mr and Mrs Anthony Wagg, of Ascot, Berkshire.

Mr D.A. Udell and Miss K.M.Y. Fong
The engagement is announced between David, son of Mr and Mrs Stanley Udell, of Stamford, Connecticut, and Karen, daughter of Mr Fong Yeng Soh and the late Mrs Fong Yeng Soh, of Singapore.

Mr P.J.A. Williamson and Miss S.A.M. Bayne
The engagement is announced between Peter, son of Mr and Mrs John Williamson, of Whangarei, New Zealand, and Edinburgh, and Sarah, daughter of Mr and Mrs Alan Bayne, of Fittleworth, West Sussex.

Marriage

Mr D.J. Isaaman and Miss M. de Casanove
The marriage has taken place in Antigua of Daniel Isaaman, son of Mr and Mrs Gerald Isaaman, of Hampstead, London, and Michele de Casanove, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Claude de Casanove, of New Southgate, Barnet.

Church news

Bishop of Lynn
The Ven Anthony Foottit, Archdeacon of Lynn (Norwich): to be Suffragan Bishop of Lynn in succession to the Right Rev David Conner.

Bishop of Ramsbury
Canon Peter Hullah, Headmaster, Chetham's School of Music, and Honorary Canon of the Cathedral and Collegiate Church of St Mary, St Denys and St George (Manchester): to be Suffragan Bishop of Ramsbury (Salisbury).

Appointments
The Rev Dr Jean Wadsworth, Priest-in-Charge, New Eltham all Saints (Southwark): has been appointed Vicar, same benefice.
The Rev Philip Watson, Team Vicar, The Benwell Team (Newcastle): to be Vicar, Stocking Farm St Luke (Leicester).

Retirements and resignations
The Rev Michael Clarke, Rector, Highnam, Lassington, Rudford, Tibberton and Taynton (Gloucester) to retire December 31.
The Ven Alan Clarkson, Archdeacon of Winchester, and Honorary Canon of Winchester Cathedral, and Vicar, Burley Ville (Winchester) to retire February 28, 1999.
The Rev Brian Cranwell, Vicar, Handsworth Woodhouse St James (Sheffield) to retire January 31.
The Rev Peter Dodd, Chaplain, Castle Hill Hospital (York) retired November 1998, with permission to officiate.
The Rev Malcolm Exley, Vicar, Bridlington Emmanuel (York) retired December 6.
Canon Eric Hatslyn, Rector, Boxford; Diocesan Adviser for Clergy Training, and Honorary Canon of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Cathedral (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich) retired January 1, 1999.
The Rev Graham Pollitt, Chaplain, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education (Gloucester) resigned October 13.
Prebendary John Skinner, Rector, Exeter St Leonard w Holy Trinity (Exeter) retired November 30.
The Rev Geoffrey Smith, Rector, Teme Valley North (Worcester) retired October 31.
The Rev Roger Stirrup, Team Rector, Ross Team Ministry (Hereford) to retire May 30, 1999.
The Rev Caroline Wareham, Assistant Curate, Aldershot St Michael and Ascension (Guildford) retired November 30.

Other appointments
Jackie Boys, Member, Diocesan Board of Social Responsibility (Norwich): to be Diocesan Social Responsibility Officer (Hereford).

PERSONAL COLUMN

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It is better - much better - to have wisdom and knowledge than gold and silver. Proverbs 16.16 (GNB).

BIRTHS

ASTBURY - On January 26th at Cheltenham General Hospital, to Nicola (née Skinner) and Paul, a daughter, Sarah Charlotte.

BARDHAN - On January 23rd at The Portland Hospital to Rachel (née Chapple) and Indrajit, a son, Hrishikesh.

BESLEY - On 25th January to Sally (née Morris) and Crispian, a son, Charles George, a little brother and test driver for Hugo.

BICKER - On January 24th 1999 at The Portland Hospital to Jayne and Robert, a son, Maximilian Elphinstone, a brother for James and Bobby.

BOWYER-BOWER - On December 31st 1998 Thomasina Lucy Arbuthnot, a daughter to Tanya and Sir William Arbuthnot Bt.

CLEARY - On 26th January 1999 (Australia Day!) in Abu Dhabi, to Lucy (née Stutchbury) and Peter, a son, George Alan.

COMBONI - On January 24th to Elizabeth (née Decker) and Paolo, a son, William Giulio, brother to James and Anna.

GILL - On December 10th 1998 at Liverpool Womens Hospital to Angela and Andy, a beautiful son, James Philip John.

HARRISON - On 22nd January 1999, to Jane (née Warrior) and David, a daughter, Xara May.

HODSON - On January 25th, in Brazil, to Tati and James, a daughter, Yasmin Suzanne.

HORNER - On January 10th to Elizabeth (née Grant) and Jeremy, a daughter, Camilla India Elizabeth, a sister for Edward and Olivia.

KOCHAN - Pawel and Sophie are delighted to announce the birth of their son Sebastian Amadeus on 20th December 1998.

LEGARD - On January 25th, to Lucy (née Kirkpatrick) and Edward, a son, Alexander Thomas, a brother for Oliver and Celia.

LOUDEN-BROWN - On Tuesday 26th January at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital, to Elizabeth (née Heartfield) and Paul, a wonderful daughter, Orfhlaith (Orla), a sister for Conor.

LYNCH - On January 23rd at The Portland Hospital to Cheryl and John, a daughter, Virginia Katherine, a sister for John Shaw.

MERRICK - On January 19th at The Portland Hospital to Jami and Paul, a son, Jordan Robert.

MYERS - On January 4th 1999 to Clare and Robert, a son, Henry Mark Buriton.

O'KELLY - On January 23rd, to Anna (née Foulds) and William, a son, Michael Christian, a brother for Alexandra.

PECOVER - On 10th January 1999, to Lucy (née Mellor) and William, a daughter Beatrice Margaret, a sister for Hugh and Matilda.

SMITH - On January 22nd at The Portland Hospital to Suzanne (née Saul-David) and Garry, a daughter, Lauren Sasha. A sister for Oliver.

STRATHCLYDE - On January 27th to Jane and Thomas, a daughter and sister to Elizabeth and Annabel.

STUTCHBURY - See Cleary.

TAYLOR - On January 12th to Josie (née Elias) and Simon a daughter, Lara Amber.

WALKER - On Monday 25th January 1999 at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading, to Melissa (née Houseman) and Matthew, a son, Oliver Blyth.

WINN-DARLEY - On January 22nd, to Sara (née Shepherd-Cross) and George, a daughter, Serena Alice.

DEATHS

OBITUARIES

REAR-ADMIRAL SIR LESLIE TOWNSEND

Rear-Admiral Sir Leslie Townsend, KCVO, CBE, Defence Services Secretary, 1979-82, died on January 13 aged 74. He was born on February 22, 1924.

Leslie Townsend was one of that small group of naval officers who reached high rank after entering the Navy as a rating. The son of a merchant seaman, he always attributed his success to his demanding, frugal and positive mother, a former lady's maid who lived to be nearly 100 and who obliged her son to speak properly and to attend night school where he learnt maths, German and typing.

Although eligible at the age of 15 when war broke out, he was unable to join the Navy as a boy seaman because his father refused his consent. Threatened with imprisonment by a recruiting sergeant for altering his National Employment Card when he tried to join the Army, he went to work in an aircraft factory near Southampton, building Blenheim bombers. He was lucky to survive an air raid in September 1940 which killed fifty and destroyed the factory. He recalled how the centre of Southampton was nearly obliterated by the *Luftwaffe* and how thousands used to trek out to spend the nights in the countryside wrapped in blankets or canvas.

Accepted by the Navy in early 1942, Townsend trained as a signalman and was drafted to the light cruiser *Durban*. Service in this obsolete, uncomfortable ship in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean inspired in Townsend an inextinguishable concern for the conditions of sailors living on the lower deck.

Because he could type, he was employed in the captain's office where a perceptive midshipman Charles Weston (later himself to become a rear-admiral) persuaded him to try for a commission.

After training at the officer school at Port Elizabeth in South Africa, Townsend was promoted to sub-lieutenant RNVR. Short of money for his uniform, he telegraphed his mother for £50, which duly arrived. A letter from his father expressed pleasure and surprise: "In my day only the sons of gentlemen became officers."

He spent the rest of the war in supply and secretariat duties at a naval air station near Freetown in Sierra Leone. On one occasion, flying on anti-submarine patrol for the experience, he had a nasty shock when, on suggesting they should turn for base, he found the pilot fast asleep.

After assisting with the military run-down in Nigeria, Townsend returned home, arriving on VJ-Day in August 1945, after three years abroad. Shortly afterwards he met his wife Marjorie, a Wren Chief Petty Officer.

Granted a permanent commission in late 1946, he followed a Supply and Secretariat officer's career with the accent on service with flagship and C-in-C's staffs.

He recalled that the decade to 1956 was a stagnant period for the Royal Navy, with questionable morale among people who had had a long war and were still enduring unenlightened conditions of service. Townsend owed at least two of his appointments to the malfeasance or premature resignation of previous incumbents.

An outstandingly efficient officer, Townsend was rapidly promoted. In his first appointment as a captain he worked for Vice-Admiral Sir Peter (later Admiral of the Fleet Lord) Hill-Norton when he was Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff. This relationship was to last for 12 years, with one break when Hill-Norton was appointed C-in-C Far East.

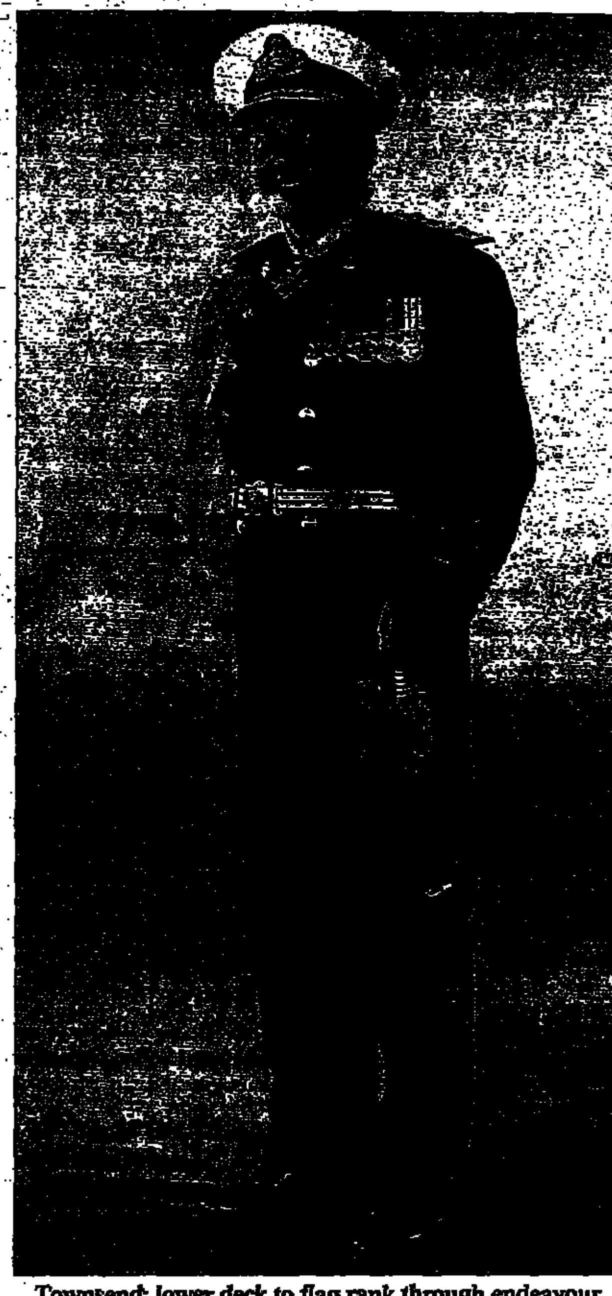
As Hill-Norton progressed through posts as First Sea Lord, Chief of Defence Staff and chairman of Nato's Military Committee in Brussels, Townsend was his aide and confidant throughout some of the more difficult years of Cold War defence politics.

Issues included the repair of relationships with the RAF after the notorious "carrier battles" that saw the loss of the Navy's fixed-wing aviation, the genesis of the Invincible class "through-deck cruiser", withdrawal from the Far East and in 1974 after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, Hill-Norton's face-to-face negotiations with Greek and Turkish military chiefs, which did much to staunch this wound in the Nato alliance.

Townsend was appointed CBE in 1973. He was a member of the Royal Household in his final post as Defence Services Secretary. Here he was responsible for the smooth operation of institutional relations between the three services and the Royal Family. In recognition of this work, he was appointed KCVO in 1981.

For 12 years he was a member of the Lord Chancellor's Panel of Independent Inspectors and was lay representative on the Armed Forces Pensions Appeal Tribunal. His charitable interests included the life vice-presidency of the RN Benevolent Trust.

He is survived by his wife Marjorie, and their son and three daughters.



Townsend: lower deck to flag rank through endeavour

PROFESSOR H. A. F. TURNER

Professor H. A. F. Turner, Montague Burton Professor of Industrial Relations in the University of Cambridge, 1963-83, died at his home in France on December 2 aged 78. He was born in London on December 11, 1919.

BERT TURNER was the most original of the creators of industrial relations as an academic subject in Britain after 1945. His interests were wide and he made many thought-provoking contributions. Early employment at the TUC under Sir Walter Citrine gave him a lasting interest in economic policy, price and wage inflation, trade union activities, management and industrial relations systems, collective bargaining and employment conditions.

Turner was the first academic in Britain to consider the Swedish concept of "wage drift", the tendency of earnings to increase faster than agreed wage rates. He took the lead in examining the impact of trade union organisation and policy on wages and wage differentials. He was among the first to consider the potential for prices and incomes policies to counter wage and price inflation. He also carried out ground-breaking studies of strikes and the extent to which trade unions cause inflation.

His great strength was a thorough understanding of economics and statistics, particularly the operation of labour markets and the limitations of available statistics. This set him apart from most other academic industrial relations specialists, notably the Oxford group, who concentrated on institutional background and history, the nature of trade unions and collective bargaining. He also had a strong interest in labour policy and in prices and incomes policies in less developed countries, and advised many governments, particularly in Africa. The recent problems suffered by many of these countries were a source of sadness to him.

Herbert Arthur Frederick Turner was educated at the Henry Thornton School, Clapham, and graduated from LSE in 1939. He spent the war first in the Army and later on the Second Sea Lord's staff. In 1944 he joined the research and economic department of the TUC and was part of the team which prepared the *Interim Report on Post-War Reconstruction* which mapped out the Attlee Government's programme.

In 1950 he took up the new post of lecturer in industrial relations at Manchester University, and his 1952 article, *Trade Unions, Differentials and the Levelling of Wages*, previewed his theory of the effect of trade union structure on pay differentials. His book *Trade Union Growth, Structure and Policy* (1962) was the most far-ranging analysis of British trade unions since the Webbs.

In 1963, after two years as Montague Burton Professor of Industrial Relations at Leeds University, he took up the Cambridge chair. There he showed the breadth of his interests. In 1965 he published *Wages: the Problems for Underdeveloped Countries* and in 1966 *Prices, Wages and Incomes Policies*. He gathered around him a notable research team whose output under his leadership included *Labour Relations in the Motor Industry* (1967), the first and most thorough investigation into Britain's most notorious industrial relations trouble-spot; *Is Britain Really Strike-Prone?* (1969), his most notable attack on accepted notions; *Do Trade Unions Cause Inflation?* (1972), a detailed analysis of one of the world's most pressing problems; and *Management Characteristics and Labour Conflict* (1978).

He became a part-time member of the National Board for Prices and Incomes in 1967 until its dissolution, playing an important part in the application of the prices and incomes policy of the day.

His expertise was also in growing demand internationally. For many years he advised, mainly on labour and pay policy, a range of governments of developing countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, either directly or through the International Labour Organisation and the United Nations, and he was a World Bank consultant on China.

Bert Turner was tall, blond, lean, imposing and a snappy dresser. Both professionally and personally he was an iconoclast. His contributions to debates were always well judged and concise, even if occasionally delivered in a seemingly off-hand and flippant manner, particularly to the pompous.

He was an inspiring lecturer and his tutorials and postgraduate supervisions were challenging and provocative, as students were prodded and persuaded into thinking. He was good company, kind, sharp, funny, zestful and thoughtful in turn.

He is survived by his fourth wife, Evelyne Hanquart-Turner, Professor of English at the University of Paris XII, by their son and daughter, by a daughter of his second marriage and by the two sons and daughter of his first.

JACK CARTER

Jack Carter, choreographer, died on December 30 aged 81. He was born on August 8, 1917.

DESPITE having worked for almost every important British ballet company, Jack Carter was a choreographer less honoured than he deserved in his own country. Nevertheless, talent and perseverance enabled him to maintain a freelance career for more than 50 years, mounting his ballets all over the world. Some of them enjoyed a long life, and there were others which, although not remaining long in the repertoire, left vivid and abiding memories.

Jack Carter was born at Shrivenham, Oxfordshire, to farming parents who opposed his choice of career. His first passion was for music, and his earliest experience of theatre was when his school gymnastics class took part dancing in *Mlada* for the local operatic society. After leaving school he travelled to see opera when he could, despite being so hard up that he walked from Paddington to Covent Garden to keep costs down. Dance became his obsession once he had seen the Ballet Russe there, its glamour and theatricality a lifelong inspiration.

Not that there was much glamour in his beginnings as a dancer, which were postponed by wartime service. He managed, however, to compose some music during the war, and had the pleasure of hearing two short pieces played by the BBC. Eventually a demobilisation grant paid for dance classes. So he started ballet very late, at rising 30, which may explain why he always knocked six years off his age in the dance reference books.

Molly Lake first employed him as a dancer in her Ballet Guild and later in her Continental Ballet. When her inspiration dried up while making a duet for a new ballet, she caught him smiling and challenged him to finish it. That prompted his first complete choreography, *Fantaisie*, to Chopin music, in 1946. It seemed largely an unashamed imitation of Ashton's *Dante Sonata*, but he begged the distinguished choreographer Antony Tudor to watch it: he found enough promise to say: "Keep going — you might do something worthwhile some day."

Another piece for Continental Ballet, the lively *Impromptu for Twelve*, was followed between 1950 and 1952 by several works for Ballet Workshop, formed at the tiny Mercury Theatre, Notting Hill, to develop new choreographers. Carter's *Echo and Narcissus* for them was shown on BBC television with two distinguished dancers, John Gilpin and Nathalie Krassovska, and he made an ambitious Proust evocation which was taken into Ballet Rambert's repertoire under the title *Past Recalled*.

Rambert acquired another of his Ballet Workshop creations, too, a comic treatment of *The Life and Death of Lola Montez*, and commissioned a further work from him. Carter also created the highly popular *Stagioni* for the small Ambassador Ballet, where he met the dancer and designer Norman McDowell who became his lifelong companion and collaborator.

But this activity, besides dancing in the *Red Shoes* film and the final incarnation of the original Ballet Russe (where Carter's roles included the important one of the Headmistress in *Graduation Ball*), brought only intermittent pay; often he went hungry, and once had nowhere to sleep but Victoria Station. So he and McDowell accepted

invitations to join the Ballet der Lage Landen in Amsterdam — a predecessor of the present Dutch National Ballet. Carter's productions there included *Coppelia*, the first three-act ballet by a Dutch company, and *The Witchboy* which proved his key to international success.

Based on the American ballad of Barbara Allen, *The Witchboy* is a powerful drama about a beautiful supernatural creature who causes mob violence in a small community, is destroyed but rises again to new life. The emotional plot, its intellectual implications about good and evil, Carter's vivid choreography for principals and ensemble, a strong score by Leonard Salzedo, and McDowell's double contribution as designer and as performer of the title role, ensured a major hit.

Deciding to leave Holland, Carter now set out to persuade Festival Ballet to mount *The Witchboy* for John Gilpin, its leading man, as a complete contrast to his usual classical parts. After many delays they agreed and it was toured widely, leading to further work for Festival Ballet (including one with plot and music by Noël Coward, *London Morning*, and to commissions for other countries.

In 1964 McDowell and Carter decided to form their own small company, London Dance Theatre, inviting other choreographers, too. It won much critical acclaim, above all for Carter's ballet *Agrionia*, an intensely gripping work built around McDowell as a Dionysus figure who destroys three sisters. But Dance Theatre could not continue without subsidy. The Arts Council, having just begun to support Festival Ballet, would not take on another client and instead suggested a merger, Festival swallowing Dance Theatre, with McDowell as artistic director and Carter as chief choreographer.

Among Carter's productions from this period, the most successful was a new staging of *The Nutcracker*, prepared in a great hurry when David Lichine wanted too high a fee for his existing version. Far from proving a makeshift, Carter's *Nutcracker* (with McDowell supervising the old designs by Benois) is widely and warmly remembered as much the best of Festival Ballet's many productions of that work, so vital to the company's financial survival. Carter also staged an interesting *Swan Lake*: rare in using Tchaikovsky's own order for the music, and giving the usual dual ballerina role of Odette/Odile to two women, so that they could confront each other. Although soon dropped by Festival Ballet to make way for a more conventional approach, Carter's *Swan Lake* is still being given after 35 years at the Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires, where he also staged it.

Another of Carter's most memorable works, *Cage of God* was made in 1967 for Western Theatre Ballet, a highly astringent but compelling treatment of Adam, Eve, Cain and Abel to music by Alan Rawsthorne. That company later became Scottish Ballet and staged further works by Carter, most notably *Three Dances to Japanese Music*, a highly original, popular and enduring piece.

In 1975-76 Carter made two works for the Royal Ballet: a Japanese revenge story, *Shukumei* to music by Stomu Yamash'ta, with a heroine who becomes a samurai, and an amusingly flippant treatment of Wedekind's *Lulu* to a Milhaud score. Both showed flair and individuality but for some reason they did not catch on, and thereafter work for him in Britain dried up except from minor companies. However, he was kept continually busy abroad, so that North and South America, Japan and New Zealand saw more of his work than Britain did in the last two decades.

His companion and collaborator Norman McDowell died in 1980. Carter, however, remained active into his eightieth year, optimistic and cheerful whatever adversity he met. He supervised a revival of his *Swan Lake* in Buenos Aires as recently as last summer.

Carter's ballet *The Witchboy* in rehearsal at the Festival Hall, July 1958

PERSONAL COLUMN

DEATHS

WILLS - Jill, suddenly on January 20th, widow of Jim and much loved stepmother of David, Vanessa and Peter. A celebration of her life will be held at All Saints Church, Hursley, Hampshire at 2.30 pm on Friday, February 5th followed by cremation. Family flowers only but donations if desired to British Heart Foundation, 33 The High Street, Ticehurst, E. Sussex TN5 7AF.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PALEOCHORA - Jane and Peter contact Sandy and John, Anogias. Lost your details.

COURT & SOCIAL

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ON THIS DAY

January 28, 1901

Giuseppe Verdi, who had died on the 27th, was born at Roncole, near Busetto, Parma. His first visit to England was in 1847 to conduct I masnadieri at Her Majesty's with Jenny Lind leading the cast.

THE DEATH OF SIGNOR VERDI

. . . Although the life of Verdi was outwardly almost uneventful, yet a stranger career it would be hard to find in the whole of musical history. Alterations of style and method are, of course, not uncommon in any art; but in most cases either the early manner is a mere reflection of something already existing, or the later is adopted in compliance with fashion rather than from conviction.

With Verdi all but the first of his four distinct manners were emphatically his own: and, as he was idolized by his enthusiastic countrymen at every stage of his development, the causes of his changes of style must be looked for in his own convictions. His first opera, *Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio*, owed a good deal, no doubt, to the Bellini-Donizetti style that was in vogue when he was a young man; but the operas of which *La Traviata* and *Il Trovatore* are the typical examples were as unmistakably his own as the richer yet severer beauties of *Don Carlos*, *Aida*, and the *Manzoni Requiem*, or as the noble and truly dramatic utterances of *Otello* and the epigrammatic conciseness of *Falstaff*; and, identified as he was in his youth with the Royalist cause in the liberation of Italy, Verdi ended his career as the representative of the conservative party, both politically and artistically.

In the now forgotten war of music publishers he was on the side of the older firm, and his last opera was rightly considered as a most serious counterblast to the productions of the "Young Italy" school, of which Mascagni was the most prominent figure.

A scarcely less remarkable thing in his career is his unparalleled popularity. In Italy it was immediate; in other countries, not unnaturally there was some opposition. In view of much that used to be said and written not so very long ago about the effect of Wagner's works upon singers and the art of singing, it is not without interest to read that in 1847 one of the leading English critics wrote, in a preliminary criticism of Verdi:— "He has hitherto shown no power as a melodist . . . Signor Verdi's *forte* is declamatory music . . . never hesitating to force an effect or to drive the singers to the 'most hazardous passes'. . . He is nothing if not noisy . . . and tempts us out of contradiction to long for the sweetest piece of sickliness which Paisiello put forth long before the notion of an orchestra had reached Italy or the singer's art was thought to mean a super-human force of lungs"; and in Lever's "Dodd Family Abroad" (1854) one of the characters, who is supposed to be repeating the prevalent opinions of Brussels, alludes to a new composer, "one Verdi — a fellow, they tell me, that cracks every voice in Europe." In more recent years, when the triumph of modern German opera was beginning, the musical world, little dreaming that *Otello* and *Falstaff* were yet to come in the composer's 74th and 80th years, assailed Verdi with much of the criticism which is summarized in Browning's familiar line about him and "His orchestra of salt-box, tongs and bones . . ."

★★★ Worth buying

NEWS

Murder strains Ulster peace plan

Republicans were accused last night of murdering a prominent IRA defector who was found with severe head injuries minutes after he had apparently painted over graffiti predicting his death.

The body of Eamon Collins, a self-confessed IRA killer who exposed republican atrocities in the book *Killing Rage*, was found on a country lane just before dawn.......................Pages 1, 12, 13

Muslim cleric's son arrested in Yemen

The teenage son of a Muslim cleric suspected of masterminding terrorist operations from his London mosque was seized in Yemen. Muhammed Kamil Mustapha and two other Britons were captured at what the Yemenis described as a mountain-top terrorist training camp, shortly before five Britons went on trial accused of plotting bombings in Aden...............Pages 1, 4

Labour stays ahead

Tony Blair and Labour have maintained their commanding lead in the opinion polls over the faltering Tories, brushing aside the Christmas wobbles and in-fighting.............................Page 1

NHS morale low

Frank Dobson admitted that NHS morale is generally low, with a shortage of at least 9,000 *nurses, problems in recruiting inner-city* GPs and a danger of care standards falling..............Page 2

Hollingsworth fined

The showbusiness agent husband of Anne Diamond was fined and banned from driving after a court was told of a violent row with a former girlfriend at a Halloween party...............................Page 3

Actor 'faked' shock

An amateur actor gave signs of suffering deep shock shortly after she is alleged to have bludgeoned and stabbed her lover's wife to death, a court heard..........Page 3

Animal trainer guilty

Mary Chipperfield left court with her reputation as an animal trainer in tatters after she was found guilty of hitting and kicking a baby chimpanzee..............Page 5

Legal fee backdown

The Lord Chancellor has agreed to withdraw his plans for "no *win, no fee" arrangements for di*vorcing couples who are fighting over property or money....Page 6

Fraud claim dropped

Two women who told police that Mohammed Sarwar had urged them to falsify their electoral registration forms withdrew their allegations as they faced the Labour MP in court.......................Page 7

Euthanasia inquiry

Fresh allegations of "backdoor euthanasia" in Britain's hospitals are being investigated by police *and health officials*............Page 8

Georgian is ideal

The 1990s dream home is a four-bedroom Georgian house set in a couple of acres in the West Country costing up to £500,000, according to *Country Life*...........Page 9

Lewinsky must testify

*Monica Lewinsky and two presi*dential advisers must testify in person before the Senate, senators *insisted*, after blocking an attempt to scrap the trial of President Clinton....................Page 17

Rain hampers rescue

Heavy rain and intermittent after shocks hampered rescue operations in Colombia's earthquake struck Andean coffee-growing heartland where more than 2,000 are feared dead..............Page 18

Abdication rumours

Amid rumours of a possible abdication for health reasons by King Hussein, his ruling family strug*gled to boost support for the new* Crown Prince Abdullah and to patch up palace feuds.......Page 19

Welsh cowboy line-dances to fame

A teenager from South Wales has stomped his way to victory in the world line-dancing championships, defeating America's leading Country and Western dancers on their home ground. Accompanied by his mother, Lynda, Chris Brocklesby, 17, travelled from Llanelli to Texas to compete against hundreds of championship-winning line-dancers.................................Page 7

PAUL COUSANS

The Princess Royal, President of the Princess Royal Trust for Carers, at a luncheon with carers from the *Manchester region yesterday*

BUSINESS

Economy: Britain's trade deficit reached a ten-year high in November at £2.2 billion, figures showed yesterday...........................Page 27

Society fined: Liverpool Victoria, the friendly society, was fined £900,000 by the Personal Investments Authority for failing to control its salesmen................Page 27

Old Mutual: The life assurance company became the latest major South African business to move to London, giving a windfall to 1.5 million black customers in South Africa and Zimbabwe, many of them living in poverty................Page 27

Markets: The FTSE 100 index fell 9.3 to 5876.4. The pound fell 0.74 cents to \$1.6522 but rose 0.12p against the euro to 69.63p. The sterling index rose to 100.3......Page 30

Football: West Ham signed Paolo Di Canio from Sheffield Wednesday and Marc-Vivien Foe from Lens for a combined fee of around £6 million..........................Page 52

Tennis: Monica Seles crushed Steffi Graf 7-5, 6-1 in the quarter-finals of the Australian Open, the most complete defeat that Graf could remember..............................Page 50

Cricket: Graeme Hick has been playing international cricket since 1991. His Test security is a long way off but in one-day cricket he is making himself indispensable. Page 49

Bryant's Eye: One of the first visits by a visiting member of the International Olympic Committee to an "Olympic venue" was to the sleepy little Shropshire town of Much Wenlock..........................*Page 46*

Cinema 1: Tom Stoppard's comic Bardic film (see below) features a reconstruction of the Rose Theatre at Bankside. Now the happy ending to the story of the real Rose can be told..................................*Page 36*

Cinema 2: The week's new movies reviewed, from *Shakespeare in Love* to the squelchy emotions of the divorce saga *Stepmom*...... Page 37

Women's stuff: Our male reviewer endures a weird night at *The Vagina Monologues* in Islington. Plus *The Starving Brides* in Hammersmith and a comic evening with Johnny Vegas.......................Page 38

Prize picture: The Spencer painting *Zacharias and Elizabeth* has been bought for the nation for £1.1 million — well worth it, says Richard Cork.......................................Page 39

Dr Thomas Stuttaford: A new asthma drug; eyedrops for glaucoma that reduce the need for surgery; pills for cholesterol ....Page 20

Quaking child: As Colombia tries to grapple with disaster, *Martin Barrow* recalls the earthquake that hit Peru in 1970.........................Page 21

Best buys: Cycle away for Valentine's; masked balls at the Venice Carnival; a week in Jamaica or Barbados for less than £500....Page 35

Reviews: Erica Wagner charts our obsession with depression and chemical cures; David Stafford tries to unravel wartime secrets; Natasha Fairweather journeys to eastside Russia...............Pages 40, 41

Even by the standards of Middle Eastern politics, it has been a tumultuous week. Former Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai has been engaged in a war of words after being sacked by Prime Minister Binjamin Netanyahu. On the other side of the River Jordan, King Hussein announced that he was replacing his brother, Prince Hassan, as heir to the throne of the Hashemite Kingdom and appointing his son Prince Abdullah. Both moves have long-term consequences for the Middle East and the viability of the peace process.

The Japan Times

TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

■ **MEDIA**
Stories behind the year's great photographs

■ **EDUCATION**
Teacher shortages: a job for short-service commissions?

Preview: *Was It Good For You?* (Channel 5) spies on naturist holidaymakers. **Review:** Joe Joseph wonders whether all bailiffs are mysoginists......................Pages 50, 51

Killing rage

Now there is a *settlement in Northern* Ireland. And still no peace. There are embryo cross-border bodies and potential places for Sinn Fein on an executive. Why is there still tolerance of terror?......Page 23

The Aden link

The Government is torn between *diplomatic imperatives:* to ensure the capture and sentencing of those responsible for the December killings while protecting the rights of the five men whose implication appears, on preliminary evidence, to be inescapable.......................Page 23

Ready-made poll tax

The Government's Bill creating a new Food Standards Agency had no reason to be controversial. Amazingly, the Government has contrived to convert this simple passport to popularity into a complicated document that will rightly be fiercely contested...............Page 23

ANATOLE KALETSKY

What has been really heartening about the recent spate of big industrial restructurings is that so many have failed. British companies seem finally to have acquired enough self-confidence to call the bluff of foreign bidders.....Page 22

PETER STOTHARD

Basil Bunting of *The Times?* It did *not sound* very likely. His name does not appear in the official history and ours is a paper which, from Thackeray to Graham Greene, has prized its literary sons.......Page 22

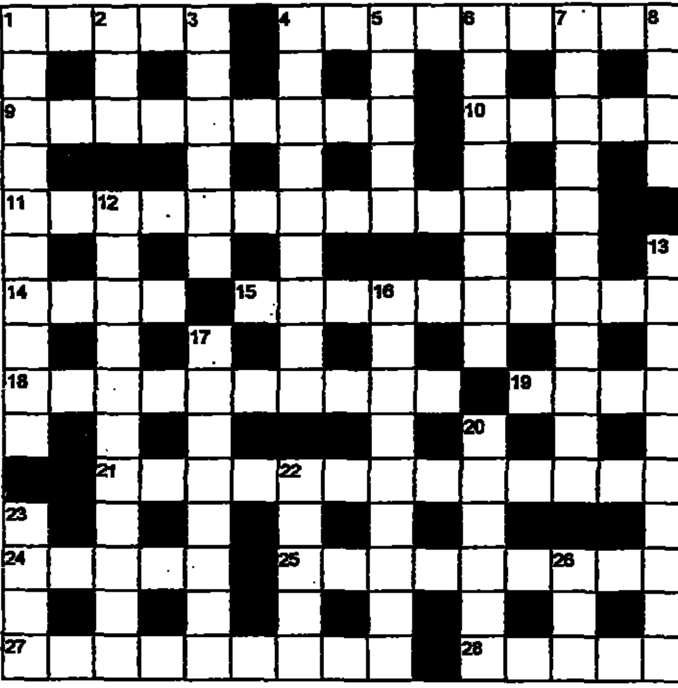
GEORGE BRIDGES

Yesterday saw the emergence of a hit squad to tackle the scourge of failing sandwiches, the Food Standards Agency. Yet there is an even greater peril to public safety than dodgy prawns......................Page 22

Rear-Admiral Sir Leslie Townsend, KCVO, CBE, Defence Services Secretary; **Jack Carter**, *choreographer*.....................Page 25

UK's arms trade; Snape Maltings; school absentees; wind turbines; Viagra; wigs for judges.....Page 23

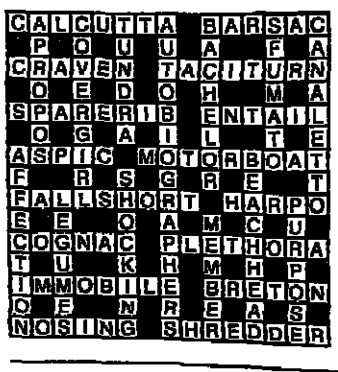
THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 21,012



ACROSS
1 High-ranking lady, for instance, is introduced to tramp (5).
4 Disorganised fellow loses head when encountering danger (9).
9 Artiste unsettled in Texas – she leaves (9).
10 *Sweet old boy retired with honour* (5).
11 Engage in controversy, and appear among best-sellers? (5,3,5).
14 Henry joins President for a walk (4).
15 Ringleader has to shout love out to the sky (10).
18 Entomological specimen left in case, specially displayed (4-6).
19 Long journey *starts* to tire *rather* excited kids (4).
21 Wasp, perhaps, disturbing an organic meal (5-8).
24 Set commercial in South American city (5).
25 Ablutions at Longleat? (9).
27 Work to make something of deal, say (9).
28 Get right inside without feeling fear (5).

DOWN
1 Wife of man who likes to gamble and drink (6,4).
2 Talk idly, and hang up (3).
3 Silver found in lake in small quantities (6).
4 Severity of gear worn by mum! (9).
5 Two fairies appearing interminably as part of video display (5).
6 A doctor (American) – he is needed for sudden attacks (8).
7 Compare this with change of air (11).
8 13 animals (4).
12 Get the bird to peep (4,1,6).
13 Unreliable person, bankrupt, initially really in want (6,4).
16 Relating to movement in train and car (9).
17 Agonised? About to identify the problem (8).
20 Soldiers reprimanded – what a bloomer! (6).
22 Go round and round, then run a little (5).
23 *Reptile caught gigantic bird* (4).
26 Wool-producers said to provide such employment (3).

Solution to Puzzle No 21,011



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CRAVEN TACITURN
SPARERIB ENTAIL
ASPIC MOTORBOAT
FALLSHORT HARPO
COGNAC PLETHORA
IMMOBILE BRETON
NOSING SHREDDER

Times Two Crossword, page 52

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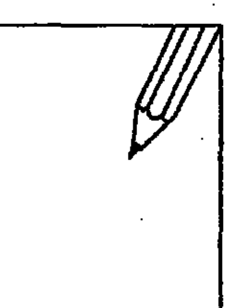
HOURS OF DARKNESS

Sun rises: 7.45 am — Sun sets: 4.42 pm
Moon sets: 4.41 am — Moon rises: 1.40 pm
Full moon January 31

London 4.42 pm to 7.43 am
Bristol 4.52 pm to 7.54 am
Edinburgh 4.37 pm to 8.14 am
Manchester 4.43 pm to 8.00 am
Penzance 5.08 pm to 8.01 am



Books for Schools token inside

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up 41.4% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1997

☐ **General:** blustery, mild in the South, dull and drizzly in central and southern England with sunny breaks in the afternoon. Cool in the North, Northern Ireland and Scotland, with showers falling as snow on mountains.
☐ **London, SE & Central S England, Midlands:** mild, dull and misty with drizzle but dry with sunny spells by the afternoon. Moderate to fresh NW wind. Max 11C (52F)
☐ **E Anglia:** misty with drizzle, sunny spells and the odd shower by afternoon. Moderate to fresh NW wind. Max 10C (50F)
☐ **E & NE England:** cool and blustery with sunny breaks and coastal showers. Fresh NW wind. Max 8C (46F)
☐ **Channel Islands, SW England, Wales:** mild and misty, drizzle at times. Fresh NW wind. Max 12C (54F)
☐ **Central N & NW England, Lake District, IoM, Northern Ireland:** sunny spells, slight risk of showers. Fresh NW wind. Max 9C (48F)
☐ **Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth:** sunny spells and occasional shower. Fresh to strong NW wind. Max 7C (45F)
☐ **SW, NW & NE Scotland, Glasgow, Central Highlands, Argyll:** sunny spells and scattered showers. Fresh to strong NW wind. Max 8C (46F)
☐ *Orkney, Shetland: showery rain and sleet.* Light to moderate E wind. Max 5C (41F)
☐ **Irish Republic:** cloudy, occasional rain or drizzle. Fresh NW wind. Max 11C (52F)
☐ **Outlook:** sunnier and much colder, overnight frost by Saturday; Scotland and Northern Ireland turning cloudy and mild with drizzle.

24 hrs to 5 pm: b=bright; c=cloud; d=drizzle; ds=dust storm; du=dull; f=fair; fg=fog; g=gales; h=hail; r=rain; sh=shower; sl=sleet; s=sun; t=thunder

	Sun hrs	Rain in	Max C	F	
Aberdeen	1.1	0.11	4	39	sl
Anglesey	0.7	0.01	9	48	r
Aspatria	-	0.08	6	43	r
Aviemore	-	0.15	3	37	r
Belfast	-	0.08	9	48	r
Birmingham	1.4	0.03	6	43	b
Bognor R	6.1	0.07	9	48	s
Bournemth	6.0	0.01	9	48	s
Bristol	4.5	0.01	8	46	s
Buxton	0.5	0.12	4	39	r
Cardiff	3.1	0.01	9	48	sh
Clacton	-	0.25	6	43	b
Cleethorpes	2.8	0.14	5	41	r
Colwyn Bay	0.9	0.04	9	48	r
Cromer	3.6	0.42	5	41	s
Eastbourne	5.4	0.11	7	45	s
Edinburgh	0.1	0.02	5	41	r
Eskdalemuir	-	0.14	3	37	sl
Exmouth	4.2	-	10	50	s
Fishguard	1.6	0.01	9	48	d
Folkestone	5.1	0.10	8	46	s
Glasgow	-	0.10	7	45	sh
Guernsey	3.5	0.20	11	52	s
Hastings	4.8	0.08	8	46	s
Hayling I.	5.9	-	9	48	s
Herne Bay	4.4	0.18	7	45	s
Hove	4.2	0.09	8	46	s
Hunstanton	2.8	0.08	5	41	s
Isle of Man	0.1	0.02	9	48	r
Isle of Wight	X	0.08	8	46	s
Jersey	3.8	0.37	10	50	b
Kinloss	-	0.13	5	41	r
Leeds	1.1	0.07	6	43	r
Lerwick	4.7	0.02	4	39	sn
Leuchars	0.5	0.06	4	39	r
Littlehampton	5.8	0.16	12	54	s
London	4.3	-	8	46	s
Lowestoft	3.4	0.10	5	41	s
Manchester	0.2	0.04	7	45	r
Margate	4.8	0.11	7	45	s
Morecambe	-	0.06	7	45	r
Newcastle	1.6	0.01	5	41	r
Newquay	0.5	0.02	10	50	d
Norwich	3.9	0.11	6	43	s
Oxford	4.0	-	8	46	s
Penzance	2.3	0.06	13	55	d
Poole	1.0	-	10	50	c
Prestatyn	0.9	0.03	7	45	c
Ross on Wye	3.3	-	8	46	s
Saunton Sands	2.5	0.02	10	50	s
Scarborough	2.3	0.19	4	39	s
Shrewsbury	0.8	0.14	8	46	c
Skegness	3.3	0.11	5	41	s
Southport	X	0.03	8	46	r
Stornoway	0.1	0.18	7	45	r
Swanage	5.7	-	9	48	s
Teignmouth	4.4	0.01	10	50	b
Tenby	1.1	0.01	10	50	sh
Tiree	0.3	0.15	9	48	sh
Tynemouth	X	-	5	41	du
Weymouth	5.3	0.05	9	48	s

Yesterday: highest day temp: Penzance 13C (55F); lowest day max: Aviemore and Altnaharra (Highland) 3C (37F); highest rainfall: Cromer 0.42ins; highest sunshine: Bognor Regis 6.1hrs.

	C	F	
Ajaccio	14	57	f
Akrotiri	17	63	f
Alex'dria	19	66	s
Algiers	16	61	s
Amst'dm	7	45	r
Athens	12	54	c
Bahrain	21	70	s
Bangkok	32	90	f
Barbados	28	82	f
Barcelona	11	52	f
Beirut	17	63	s
Belgrade	-2	28	fg
Berlin	6	43	f
Bermuda	18	64	f
Biarritz	11	52	r
Bordeaux	10	50	c
Brussels	7	45	f
Budapest	-3	27	d
B Aires	27	81	f
Beijing	10	50	s
Cairo	20	68	f
Cape Tn	28	82	s
Chicago	0	32	f
Ch'church	X		
Cologne	6	43	f
C'phagn	4	39	f
Corfu	13	55	s
Dublin	5	41	f
Dubrovnik	12	54	s
Faro	16	61	s
Florence	5	41	c
Frankfurt	6	43	f
Funchal	18	64	f
Geneva	6	43	r
Gibraltar	15	59	s
Helsinki	-16	3	c
Hong K	20	68	s
Innsbruck	3	37	f
Istanbul	10	50	s
Jeddah	29	84	s
Jo'burg	23	73	f
L Palmas	21	70	s
Le Tquet	7	45	f
Lisbon	10	50	f
Locarno	5	41	f
L Angeles	11	52	r
Luxembg	4	39	c
Luxor	23	73	s
Madrid	3	37	fg
Majorca	16	61	s
Malaga	17	63	s
Malta	14	57	f
Melbourne	19	66	s
Mexico C	18	64	s
Miami	25	77	s
Milan	7	45	s
Montreal	-3	27	f
Moscow	0	32	sn
Munich	10	50	r
Nairobi	28	82	s
Naples	13	55	f
N Delhi	17	63	s
N York	3	37	s
Nice	10	50	c
Oslo	-4	25	c
Paris	8	46	f
Perth	38	100	s
Prague	4	39	r
Reykjavik	-2	28	s
Rhodes	14	57	f
Rio de J	29	84	s
Riyadh	17	63	s
Rome	8	46	c
Salzburg	8	46	f
S Frisco	8	46	f
Santiago	26	79	s
S Paulo	X		
Seoul	8	46	s
Singapore	30	86	f
Stockholm	-9	16	sn
Strasb'rg	5	41	r
Sydney	25	77	f
Tangier	15	59	s
Tel Aviv	19	66	s
Tenerife	21	70	s
Tokyo	15	59	s
Toronto	-1	30	c
Tunis	15	59	c
Valencia	19	66	s
Vanc'ver	4	39	f
Venice	1	34	fg
Vienna	-1	30	c
Warsaw	6	43	c
Wash'ton	9	48	s
Wellngton	18	64	X
Zurich	8	46	f

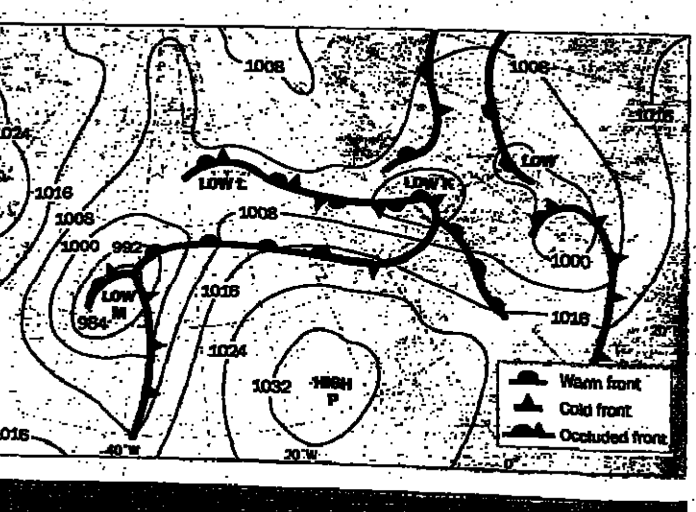
Temperatures at midday local time. X = not available

TODAY

CALM

MODERATE

Changes to chart below from noon: low L will remain slow-moving; low M will move north and deepen; low K will drift southeast and fill; high P will build northeastwards



TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
Aberdeen	10:36	3.9	23:01	4.0
Avonmouth	3:41	11.1	16:21	11.5
Belfast	8:00	3.2	20:31	3.2
Cardiff	3:27	10.3	16:07	10.7
Devonport	2:14	4.8	14:51	4.8
Dover	7:48	5.9	20:30	5.9
Dublin	8:46	3.9	21:08	4.0
Falmouth	1:45	4.6	14:22	4.6
Greenock	9:10	3.1	21:57	3.1
Harwich	8:22	3.8	21:10	3.6
Holyhead	7:26	5.0	19:52	5.1
Hull (Albert D)	2:47	7.9	15:40	7.8
Ilfracombe	2:39	7.7	15:18	8.0
King's Lynn	3:03	5.8	15:41	5.7
Leith	11:45	5.0	-	-
Liverpool	8:09	8.2	20:40	8.5
London Bridge	10:37	6.4	23:23	6.6
Lowestoft	6:00	2.4	18:53	2.3
Margate	8:34	4.3	21:26	4.3
Milford Haven	2:59	5.8	15:34	6.0
Newquay	1:58	5.9	14:31	6.0
Oban	3:05	3.2	15:42	3.4
Penzance	1:21	4.7	13:54	4.8
Portland	3:08	1.6	15:43	1.6
Portsmouth	8:26	4.3	21:00	4.3
Shoreham	8:00	5.6	20:37	5.4
Southampton	7:53	4.2	20:31	4.2
Swansea	2:57	10.9	15:32	11.2
Tees	0:16	9.4	13:00	9.4
Walton-On-Naze	8:24	3.7	21:12	3.7

All times GMT. Heights in metres.

THE TIMES 2

INSIDE SECTION 2 TODAY

BUSINESS Graham Searjeant on Blair and the laws of economics PAGE 31

ARTS Cristina Ortiz brings passion to the piano PAGES 36-39

SPORT Ruthless Seles grinds Graf into Melbourne dust PAGES 44-52

TELEVISION AND RADIO Pages 50, 51

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY JANUARY 28 1999

Chancellor's own guidelines leave him 'little scope' for radical Budget changes

Slowdown cuts Brown's options

By Alasdair Murray
Economics Correspondent

GORDON BROWN will have "little scope" for radical Budget changes because the economic slowdown has left him barely able to meet his own borrowing guidelines, a leading economics think-tank claimed yesterday.

However, the annual Institute for Fiscal Studies/Goldman Sachs *Green Budget* forecasts that the Chancellor may finally introduce the long-awaited 10p tax band — although he will need to make other tax increases to fund it.

The warning came as new data showed that Britain's trade deficit with non-EU countries reached record proportions last year when the financial crises in Asia and Russia exacted a big toll of the county's export performance.

Economists claimed that the deteriorating trade balance is now likely to act as a significant drag on economic growth this year and the Bank of England will need to cut rates again to try to compensate.

David Walton, UK economist at Goldman Sachs, told the *Green Budget* launch that although interest rates should fall to 5 per cent by the end of this year, this would not prevent the economy "flirting with recession".

Growth is expected to fall to just 0.4 per cent this year, resulting in higher social security spending and lower tax receipts than the Government is currently forecasting. As a result, the Chancellor will have "very little margin for error" on his borrowing rules. "There is no case for significant fiscal adjustments in either direction," Mr Walton said. Further fiscal tightening would prolong the economic slowdown while a giveaway budget would breach the borrowing rules. The IFS added that if Mr Brown uses the Budget to introduce the 10p tax starting rate, he would look for other measures, such as the abolition of mortgage interest relief, to fund it.

The alternative would be to abolish the existing 20p rate of tax and introduce the 10p rate over a smaller band to ensure it has a neutral impact. The IFS calculates that this could be achieved if the 10p band is only introduced on the first £880 of taxable income.

The trade figures showed that the December non-EU trade gap narrowed only slightly to £1.65 billion, leaving the whole-year deficit at a record £15.7 billion, double that of 1997. The November global trade gap also widened to £2.18 billion from £1.62 billion the previous month, while the quarterly deficit registered £6.4 billion — the highest figure in nearly ten years.

Analysts said the poor trade performance will reduce GDP by up to 0.75 percentage points and that the Bank may react by cutting rates in an effort to stimulate domestic demand.

Eddie George, the Governor, confirmed that the Bank will consider this strategy, telling the House of Lord's Monetary Affairs Select Committee on Tuesday that industrialised countries will have to consider cutting rates to compensate for the poor global trade outlook.

Dharshini David, UK economist at HSBC, said: "With external demand clearly deteriorating, the monetary policy committee may well attempt to stimulate domestic demand by cutting base rates by another quarter point next week."

Analysts said the economic problems in Asia and Russia seem to have damaged exports more than the strong pound. While the deficit with non-EU countries stands at record levels, there is likely to be only a marginal increase in the full-year deficit with EU countries.

In value terms, exports to South-East Asia fell 27 per cent in the year to December, while the value of imports from the region rose by 3 per cent. Exports to Russia also slumped by a quarter.

Liverpool Victoria fined £900,000

By Caroline Merrell

LIVERPOOL VICTORIA, the UK's biggest friendly society, has been fined a record £900,000 by the Personal Investment Authority (PIA). It must also pay compensation, estimated at £10 million.

The society failed to keep proper records of the sales it made, failed to recruit salespeople with adequate training, and failed to keep up with regulatory changes introduced to protect customers.

The PIA censure comes amid rumours about a rift between Roy Hurley, the chief executive, and Andrew Noble, chairman, after two years of turmoil within the society. Liverpool Victoria has been trying to find a strategic direction faced with increasing regulatory costs and narrowing profit margins on its core business of selling savings schemes to those on low income.

TOP TEN FINES LEVIED BY THE PIA	
Liverpool Victoria	£900,000
[illegible]	[illegible]
Britannic Assurance	£525,000
[illegible]	[illegible]
Friends Provident	£450,000
DBS Financial [illegible]	[illegible]
Financial Options	£400,000
[illegible]	[illegible]
Minet Consultancy Service	£250,000
[illegible]	[illegible]

Liverpool Victoria yesterday estimated that it could be forced to pay compensation of £10 million to 50,000 customers that may have been missold ten-year endowment savings schemes.

The fine is imposed just weeks after the departure of David Cheeseman, the former compliance director, who was recruited three years ago from Prudential Corporation.

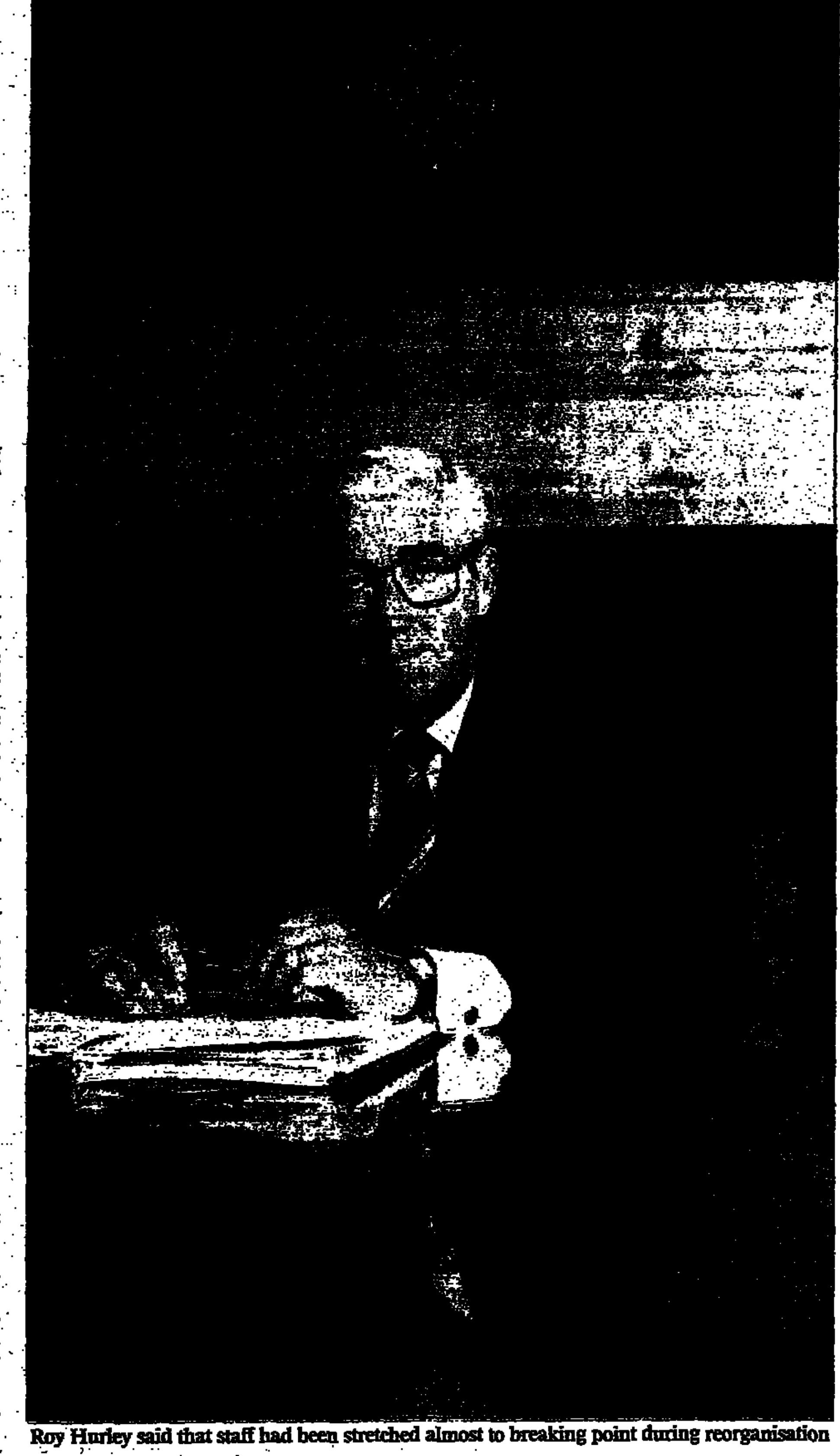
The friendly society, which has two million policyholders and £5 billion under management, claims that it wants to remain both mutual and independent. However, the fine and the problems it reveals pave the way for an approach from a bidder. The balance sheet benefits from £1 billion of extra assets that do not have to be distributed to policyholders. United Insurance and Royal London, another mutual, have both been tipped as possible bidders.

Mr Hurley, recruited from the AA to revitalise the society, admitted last year that its staff had been stretched "almost to breaking point", as it went through an extensive reorganisation and retraining programme. The review ended with the departure of all but 50 of its salesman, and 450 agents responsible for collecting premiums door-to-door.

Mr Hurley said: "This has been a difficult and painful period for the Liverpool Victoria Group. It is encouraging to see that the PIA has recognised the amount of effort and resource that has been and is being invested to ensure we are fully compliant for the future."

Mr Hurley trained as an accountant before joining the insurance industry, and, as a former Barnado's boy, believes he has an affinity with the Liverpool Victoria client base.

Commentary, page 29



Roy Hurley said that staff had been stretched almost to breaking point during reorganisation

GRE chief to argue against auction offers

By Jason Nissé

JOHN ROBINS, chief executive of Guardian Royal Exchange, is to present a case for rejecting all offers for the insurer to the board tomorrow, arguing that a break-up of the company by existing management could raise £3.7 billion.

The board is to consider the final offers by at least three bidders in the auction being conducted by Morgan Stanley, the investment bank.

Royal & SunAlliance, is leading the race with an offer of £3.4 billion or 390p a share. This offer is a mixture of cash and RSA shares and would be almost certain to be referred to the the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Eureko, a consortium of six European mutual insurers, including Friends Provident, has offered 385p a share in cash. Though the bid is backed by Chase Manhattan, the US bank, there is concern whether the consortium has enough cash to deliver on its offer, having failed to win the battle to buy GAN, the French group, last year.

Axa, the French insurer, has bid 370p a share, but is only likely to win GRE if all the other bids fall through.

Mr Robins, advised by HSBC Investment Bank, is understood to believe that the best value for GRE is to sell off the parts of the group to the highest bidders. Prudential Corporation is understood to be keen on the US business while Axa is eager to buy the UK general insurance operations.

HSBC says this route could return 420p a share of value to GRE investors, nearly £300 million more than is on offer for any of the other bidders.

BUSINESS TODAY

FTSE 100	5876.4	(-9.3)
Yield	2.78%	
FTSE All Share	2677.42	(+0.76)
Nikkei	14450.06	(+68.05)
New York:		
Dow Jones	9298.58	(-26.00)*
S&P Composite	1252.46	(-0.15)*
Federal Funds	4[illegible]%*	(4[illegible]%)
Long bond	101[illegible]*	(101[illegible])
Yield	5.15%*	(5.12%)
3-mth interbank	5[illegible]%	(5[illegible]%)
Liffe long gilt future (Mar)	120.11	(120.21)
New York		
$	1.6485*	(1.6593)
London:		
$	1.6521	(1.6595)
€	1.4362	(1.4339)
SFr	2.3092	(2.3005)
Yen	190.68	(189.40)
£ Index	100.3	(100.2)
London:		
€	1.1482*	(1.1561)
SFr	1.4013*	(1.3890)
Yen	115.68*	(113.73)
$ index	104.9	(104.3)
Tokyo close Yen 113.80		
Brent 15-day (Apr)	$10.95	($10.75)
London close	$284.55	($285.15)
Exchange rates		Page 28

* denotes midday trading prices

Robust Rock

Northern Rock is to launch a new home loan that will allow people to borrow more than 100 per cent of the value of a property in spite of giving a warning that the UK economy was headed for a "bumpy landing". Page 28

In demand

Powerscreen International, the engineering company based in Northern Ireland, received informal approaches from other companies as it recovered from disastrous accounting irregularities. Page 29

Old Mutual move to benefit black policyholders

By Marianne Curphey, Insurance Correspondent

MORE than 1.5 million black policyholders with Old Mutual, the South African life insurer, will receive a windfall worth one year's average salary when the company demutualises and joins the London stock market.

Half of the 3.2 million beneficiaries of the demutualisation, announced yesterday, are from the black middle class and live in South Africa and Zimbabwe. The distribution of about 300 shares per member, worth about £400, is likely to have a significant effect on the local economy.

Old Mutual is the latest in a line of established South African businesses to announce they intend to relocate their headquarters to London. The company confirmed yesterday it had been granted permission from the South African Finance Ministry to demutualise.

The company said the windfall would be a significant contribution towards black economic empowerment.

The life insurer, whose origins date back to 1845, is likely to join the FTSE 100 soon after its stock market debut and could be worth up to £4 billion.

Old Mutual's decision to decamp follows moves by South African Breweries and Anglo American Corporation, the mining and industrial company. Both are due to shift base in March.

Listing in London gives South African groups access to cheaper capital, which the company said it intended to use to buy businesses specialising in asset management and savings products.

Bumper £730,000 payoff for Sears finance director

By Sarah Cunningham

DAVID DEFTY, the finance director of Sears, is in line for a bumper payout of nearly £730,000 following the takeover of the retail group by January Investments, the company backed by David and Frederick Barclay and run by Philip Green.

According to the final offer document, sent to Sears's shareholders last night, Mr Defty was paid £55,000 as a discretionary performance-related bonus on Monday. He is also to be paid a loyalty bonus of £220,000 by April 30, and he will be paid a further £453,410 in connection with the severance of his two-year contract. Mr Defty joined the company in 1994 and was on an annual salary of £220,000.

Roger Groom, the property director, is the only other director who has agreed severance terms so far, according to the document. He will receive a payoff of £268,368, plus a contribution of £50,000 into the company pension scheme. Mr Groom was also on a two-year contract and was on a salary of £177,800.

Sir Bob Reid, chairman of Sears, is to stay on the board for a period following the takeover, as is Lord Tebbit, a non-executive director, in order to look after the interests of minority shareholders.

January Investments declared yesterday that it now owns 72.6 per cent of Sears. The 359p a share offer, which values the company at £548 million, closes on February 19.

Emerging markets to cost banks £36bn

By Janet Bush
Economics Editor

BANKS faces losses of about $60 billion (£36 billion) because of their exposure to volatile emerging markets, according to the Institute of International Finance (IIF).

The institute, which represents *more than 300 financial institutions* worldwide, yesterday urged private sector lenders to take urgent steps to strengthen their risk analysis and risk management.

The turmoil in emerging markets forced many institutions to re-examine their risk management procedues rigorously, said John Bond, chairman of HSBC, who is also head of the IIF. The IIF is one of the few industry groups so far to have apportioned *some of the blame for the financial crisis* to the incompetence of lenders.

Mr Bond said: "This is axiomatic — both borrowers and lenders must do a better job in making sound decisions, if the problems of the past 18 months are not to be repeated."

In this context, an IIF working group yesterday suggested the development of a direct dialogue between country authorities and the private sector in crisis avoidance and for *greater private sector involvement in* crisis resolution.

It said that mechanisms should be *put in place* for regular and comprehensive consultation by sovereign borrowers with private sector creditors and investors in meetings and teleconferences. It cited the example of Mexico which, since 1996, has held quarterly briefings with market participants involving senior finance ministry and central bank officials.

The IIF *said yesterday that net* private capital flows to leading emerging market economies were expected to total *$140 billion this year. This is a* little lower than the $150 billion in 1998 but much weaker than the $260 billion of 1997.

However, it expects foreign direct investment to hold near to the 1998 total and predicted a recovery in portfolio equity flows to emerging markets to some $19 billion from only $2.4 billion in 1998. These two categories indicated a robust long-term confidence in emerging market economies.

Rock offers combined mortgage and loan

By Richard Miles, Banking Correspondent

NORTHERN ROCK is to launch a new home loan that will allow people to borrow more than 100 per cent of the value of a property despite giving a warning that the UK economy was headed for a "bumpy landing". The former building society has set aside £3.1 million in the second half *against any further deterioration* in economic conditions.

The new home loan, dubbed Together and supported by a £1 million advertising campaign, *bundles together a mortgage* and a personal loan. Interest rates on 100 per cent mortgages are usually far higher than loans for 95 per cent or lower of *a property's market value.*

The general provision held annual profits to £202.6 million, a 7.6 per cent rise on 1997 but still at the lower end of the City's forecasts for Northern Rock's first full year as a quoted bank.

Net lending was unchanged at £1.8 billion, equivalent to an estimated market share of 7 per cent, more than double Northern Rock's historical share of mortgage stock. But the bank maintained these high volumes at the expense of profitability: the net interest margin fell to 1.70 per cent from 1.92 per cent.

Adam Applegarth, executive director, said the decline in the net interest margin was offset by the growth in other income. Fixed interest rate mortgages — which accounted for 78 per cent of business in 1998 compared with 57 per cent in the previous year — were less profitable, but the fees stemming from such deals were higher, said Mr Applegarth.

The bank said it would pay a final dividend of 8.1p per share, taking the total dividend to 12p, a rise of 14.3 per cent. *The final dividend, payable* on May 28, will be worth £40.50 to former members who kept hold of the basic 500-share distribution at con*version, and comes on top of* an interim dividend worth £19.50. Northern Rock said it had 336,000 small shareholders, representing about 40 per *cent of the total stock.*

Leo Finn, chief executive, said he had detected no signs of a deterioration in credit quality; both arrears and possessions fell during the year. But he said the economy "was headed for a bumpy landing; we just don't know how bumpy", adding that falling interest rates might protect the housing market from the worst of any decline.

Mr Finn also said the bank was considering the securitisation of new mortgage business. This involves bundling together small loans and selling them off in the bond markets. Northern Rock shares fell 30½p to 497½p yesterday.

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Bob Bennett, left, finance director, Leo Finn and Adam Applegarth say the economy is headed for a bumpy landing

BDO poised to merge with rival

By Robert Bruce

BDO STOY HAYWARD is to merge with rival Moores Rowland, creating an accountancy firm with annual fees of £150 *million.*

The new BDO Stoy Hayward will be the biggest firm in the UK outside the so-called 'Big Five' firms, ahead of Grant Thornton.

Moores Rowland, whose name will vanish after the March 1 merger date, was last year involved in a ten-month marathon effort to merge with the firm of Kidsons, which was finally called off in October. BDO is currently the UK's seventh largest accountancy firm, with 232 partners and some 2,000 staff in 35 offices. Moores *Rowland has* more than 80 partners and 600 staff.

The expectation is that the merger will trigger considerable and urgent consolidation among the remaining mid-tier firms, all of which are now some way adrift of both the enlarged BDO Stoy Hayward and Grant Thornton.

Accountancy, page 32

London Electricity deal passed by EU

By Adam Jones

THE European Commission has approved the £1.9 billion purchase of London Electricity by Electricité de France, disregarding *the UK Government's* claim that it should rule on the deal.

The Government had wanted the Office of Fair Trading to adjudicate because it was worried that EdF already exports electricity to the UK.

However, the European Commission waved the deal through yesterday. It said the takeover "would not materially affect competition" in the UK, despite the "vertical integration" of generator and supplier and that there was no need to refer it back to the UK.

A Department of Trade and Industry spokesman claimed that the Government was satisifed because Brussels said it could impose conditions on London's licence to make sure the supply business is clearly separated from the rest of EdF and that London does not end up striking contracts with EdF generators.

Unit trust pricing to be simpler

By Gavin Lumsden

THE Financial Services Authority is allowing fund managers to simplify the pricing structure *of their unit trusts in* an attempt to encourage new investors in the stock market.

From next month, fund managers will be free to replace the dual pricing system, which has confused investors for years, with simpler single pricing.

The FSA's move also makes it easier for fund managers to fulfil *the criteria for the* Government's Cat (cost, access, terms) standard, which will be used to promote good value individual savings accounts when they replace personal equity plans in April.

The FSA is expected to make single pricing compulsory by 2001.

Dual pricing — in which investors are quoted separate offer and bid prices when they buy and sell units in a fund — has long been unpopular with the public as it is complex and has led to charges that some fund managers were using the method to hide their fees.

Under single pricing, inves*tors will be quoted a single* mid-price when they buy and sell. Dealing costs and management fees will be explicit.

CGU defies economic slowdown

By Marianne Curphey
Insurance Correspondent

CGU, *the* composite insurer, reported an *8* per cent rise in worldwide new business to £5.43 billion, despite volatile investment markets over the past year and the economic *slowdown.*

Although the figure was just under the £5.52 billion expected by analysts, CGU shares rose 29½p to 876½p after good results from the UK, The Netherlands and Italy were unveiled.

New worldwide annual premiums rose 11 per cent to £441 million, while single premium sales were 4 per cent higher at £4.4 billion. Sales of retail investment products such as personal equity plans (Peps) and unit trusts rose 48 per cent to £602 million.

CGU said that applications for Peps in the first week of 1999 were up 40 per cent on the same period last year. This reflects retail demand for Peps in the last financial year they will be available to savers before they are replaced by the individual savings account (Isa).

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Sega dreams of £260m bond issue

THE CRAZE for computer games showed no sign of abating
yesterday as more than 35 City fund mangers turned up to the
launch of a 50 billion yen (£260 million) bond issue by Sega,
the Japanese video games giant. *The move* comes amid a
boom for computer games and consoles, with machines no[illegible]
as likely to be bought by trendy clubbers in their mid-twe[illegible]
ties as teenagers. Sega's bond issue is designed to raise cash
for the launch of its new high-tech Dreamcast games console,
which offers high-quality graphics and Internet access.

Sega hopes that the Dreamcast will finally end the reign of Sony's PlayStation, and severely dent sales of the Nintendo 64. However, both Sony and Nintendo are also expected to launch new *consoles* in the near future. Both machines are expected to be as powerful as the Dreamcast. The Dreamcast, which follows Sega's Mega Drive and Saturn consoles, will be launched in Britain later this year. The consoles are expected to cost under £200 each. Representatives from institutions including Merrill *Lynch and Prudential* turned up to the launch, managed by Nomura. The bonds will be convertible and have a maturity of four years.

Paperchase stake sold

BORDERS, the acquisitive US bookshop chain, has taken a 19.9 per cent in Paperchase, the stationery company spun off from WH Smith almost three years ago. The company said that Paperchase has concess*ions in Books Etc.* The deal is expected to lead to a full £5 million takeover of Paperchase, which would make millions of pounds for Timothy Melgund, its managing director. Borders is understood to have paid about £1 million for the stake — the same amount that Mr Melgund's team bought the entire *company for in June 1996.*

Comstrad chief's ban

A SOFTWARE expert, whose company *sold computer* programmes purporting to guarantee success in gambling, has been banned from being a director for 13 years. Kevin John Robinson, from Queensland, Australia, ran Comstrad, which was wound up on October 2, 1996, with debts of £457,233, not including customer claims for rebates. The High Court found that Comstrad made serious misrepresentations about its products and that Mr Robinson approved unsecured loans totalling £250,000 to connected companies with reckless disregard for other creditors.

Games Workshop falls

SHARES of Games Workshop, the toy, model and science-fiction games specialist, yesterday fell 11 per cent from 445p to 397½p as the company admitted that sales had been "below our own high standard". The company reported an 8.2 per cent rise in pre-tax profits for the six months to November 29 of £5.2 million on sales of £35.5 million, *up 12 per cent. Earnings per share* were 10.9p, up 7.9 per cent from 10.1p. An interim dividend of 3.56p, up from 3.3p, will be paid on April 6.

Kingfisher shares soar

SHARES of Kingfisher surged yesterday after Castorama, its separately quoted DIY joint venture, said that sales rose 14.5 per cent during 1998. Castorama Dubois Investissements, which is quoted on the *Paris bourse and contains B&Q* as well as France's Castorama chain, said that on a comparable group basis and at constant exchange rates, sales were up 11.7 per cent to Fr24.1 *billion.* B&Q became part of Castorama on December 18. Kingfisher owns 55 per cent of Castorama, and the British company's shares rose 42p to 628p.

Conoco hit by losses

CONOCO, the oil company, yesterday reported a fourth-quarter 1998 net loss of $263 million (£158 million) or 42 cents per share, in its the first stand-alone result since spinning off from DuPont. This compares with a $221 million net profit last time. For the full year, Conoco's net profit fell to $450 millione, after $271 million in charges, from $1.029 billion the previous year. Conoco's demerger from DuPont was accompanied by a $4.4 billion initial public offering of shares that was heavily over-subscribed.

Mobil earnings plunge

MOBIL, the oil and gas company, has highlighted the pain in *the oil sector* with a 48 per cent plunge in *1998* net earnings to $1.7 billion (£1.03 billion). The result was made worse by an exceptional charge of $651 million in the fourth quarter, stemming from a writedown in the value of its oil reserves. Operating profit in the final three months was $499 million, 38 per cent lower than for the previous corresponding period. Earnings per share for the year slumped to $2.12 a share, down from $4.10 previously.

Drug launch lifts BTG

SHARES of BTG, the company that commercialises intellectual property, recovered 25p to 310p yesterday thanks to the European launch of a treatment for haemophilia B. Baxter Healthcare of the US is promoting BeneFix, developed by Genetics Institute, which relied on technology rights assembled by BTG. Ian Harvey, chief executive, said US sales of BeneFix over the past two years had been well above expectations and BTG hopes to earn substantial revenues from the drug. BeneFix tackles a defect in a blood-clotting protein.

Ashbourne deal

ASHBOURNE PHARMACEUTICALS, the supplier to dispensing doctors, has been valued at £32 million in a deal that will see HSBC Private Equity take a substantial stake. Ashbourne was founded in 1984 by Dallas Burston, chief executive and previously the sole shareholder. Dr Burston said HSBC's backing endorses Ashbourne's position as the premier provider to a sector that represents 16 per cent of the prescription-only medicines written by general practitioners. Barclays provided bank finance for the deal.

Hopes for British Biotech on back of giant US deal

By Paul Durman

THE beleaguered biotechnology industry has been given a shot in the arm by Warner-Lambert, *the American drugs* group that is paying $2.1 billion (£1.3 billion) to acquire Agouron Pharmaceuticals of California.

The deal is one of the largest purchases of a biotech firm by "big pharma", and has implications for British Biotech, the former flagship of the UK sector, whose cancer drug is similar to one of Agouron's most important products.

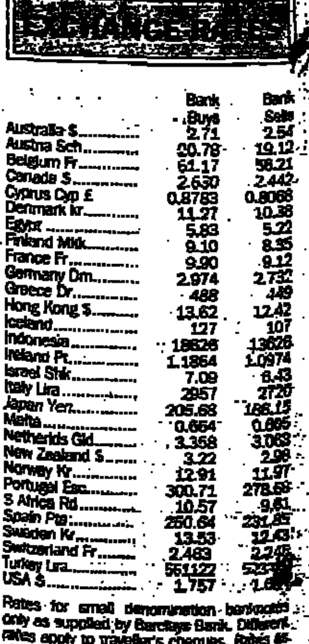
Like British Biotech's Marimastat, Agouron's AG-3340 is a matrix metalloproteinase inhibitor, an important new class of cancer drugs that aim *to stop tumours spreading.*

Nick Woolf, analyst with BancBoston Robertson Stephens, said: "It's got to be good news for British Biotech." Others saw the Warner-Lambert move as a validation of the Oxford firm's technology platform.

Shares in British Biotech slipped to a new low of 23p yesterday. Marimastat is about a year ahead of AG-3340, but British Biotech's credibility has been shredded by the overblown claims made for its drug and doubts about the design of its clinical trials.

Unlike UK biotech companies, Agouron is already profitable thanks to sales of Viracept, its $500 million-a-year HIV drug that is the most prescribed protease inhibitor in the US.

Warner-Lambert is paying about $60 a share, or three times Agouron's 12-month low. Peter Laing, analyst at SG Securities, suggested Agouron's decision to sell out to Warner-Lambert represented an acknowledgement that biotech companies could not make it *on their own.*



EXCHANGE RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia $	2.71	2.54
Austria Sch	20.78	19.12
Belgium Fr	61.17	56.21
Canada $	2.630	2.442
Cyprus Cyp £	0.8783	0.8068
Denmark Kr	11.27	10.36
Egypt	5.83	5.22
Finland Mkk	9.10	8.35
France Fr	9.90	9.12
Germany Dm	2.974	2.732
Greece Dr	488	449
Hong Kong $	13.62	12.42
Iceland	127	107
Indonesia	18626	13626
Ireland Pt	1.1864	1.0974
Israel Shk	7.09	6.43
Italy Lira	2957	2720
Japan Yen	205.68	186.15
Malta	0.664	0.605
Netherlds Gld	3.358	3.063
New Zealand $	3.22	2.98
Norway Kr	12.91	11.97
Portugal Esc	300.71	278.68
S Africa Rd	10.57	9.61
Spain Pta	250.64	231.85
Sweden Kr	13.53	12.43
Switzerland Fr	2.483	2.245
Turkey Lira	551122	[illegible]
USA $	1.757	[illegible]

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Brown on the edge of an abyss

COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Gordon Brown is walking a tightrope. The Chancellor may be dainty on his feet, but he may soon wish that he had allowed himself the luxury of a safety net — just in case.

He may still enjoy a soft landing, but it is no certainty. The Institute of Fiscal Studies has been doing its calculations in order to offer him a little pre-Budget advice and it finds him with perilously little room for manoeuvre. The budget surplus that our Chancellor has been aiming for is, as far as the IFS can see, a mirage. While Mr Brown can see £33 billion building up in his coffers by 2004, the IFS fears that, by the time we get there, the safe will be empty.

This does not amount to the "Black Hole" that critics spotted as soon as the self-proclaimed prudent Chancellor started promising to dole out public money with unusual generosity, but it does come perilously close. Yesterday's dismal trade figures show just how easy it would be for him — and the country — to stumble into the abyss.

The problems in Asia are, inevitably, taking their toll on Britain. Only an optimist — and perhaps Mr Brown is one, although it has not been particularly apparent before — would be confident that the worst of the Asian crisis is over. Only an optimist would bank on the United States economy continuing to soar, pulling Britain in its wake.

Mr Brown now seems to have such optimism forced upon him, if he is to stick by his forecasts. But, while he may bravely stick to his predictions when he heads to the despatch box in March, he will surely feel constrained against digging any further into a surplus that may be non-existent. The Budget is likely, therefore, to be short on hand-outs.

There are still some who expect him to fulfil his wish to bring in a 10p tax rate. If so, it will have to be paid for and there must be a strong possibility that MIRAS will foot the bill. Doing away with mortgage tax relief, even in a phased way, is a perfectly logical step and will be less painful for homebuyers now that interest rates have been brought down.

But tax relief on mortgages has an emotional impact way beyond its fiscal value: it is a totem of the middle classes. Mr Blair's determination that Labour must win the votes of the middle classes would not be furthered by such a move. Woking man has been encouraged to believe in the merits of home ownership and would probably not be enamoured of a government that appeared to stop encouraging it.

In the next few weeks Mr Brown will be on the receiving end of suggestions from numerous organisations about what he should produce from his Budget box. The only ones he is likely to want to hear are those that are either fiscally neutral or have a chance of bolstering the Government finances.

Mr Prescott's plans for taxing car-parking spaces could be in for a revival.

Where next for the friendly society?

The Liverpool Victoria is not going to be broken by a £900,000 fine, even if it is the largest to have been demanded by the regulator. Yet the future of what appears to have been a far from friendly friendly society now looks far from certain.

This is an organisation that has lost its way and the catalogue of misdeeds it committed were the almost inevitable result of its confusion.

Frank Field, when he was thinking about revolutionising the way that pensions are provided in this country, put much store on the role that friendly societies might be able to play. He saw in them organisations of benevolent rather than venal intent, playing a responsible part in their communities.

Liverpool Victoria may once have seen itself in just that light, but ideas had clearly changed by the time its direct selling force was knocking on the doors of people with little cash to spare and persuading them to buy expensive products that would enrich the salesmen and the society but not the customers.

Its uncertainty about its role had become apparent when it paid heavily for Frizzell, an organisation with a very different cultural background, and then allowed its identity to frizzle away.

The PIA was horrified by the way that the Liverpool Victoria ran its business. Just like the Prudential, from where, ironically, its compliance office had come, the Liverpool Victoria was not sending out an army of kindly gentlemen with the best interests of their regular customers at heart. Instead, it was letting loose a battalion of hungry commission-seekers.

Such beings do not easily respond to being retrained, so the Liverpool Victoria has scythed back its direct selling force. But where does it go next?

Its orphan assets of at least £1 billion, and maybe as much as £2 billion, may make it look attractive to others in the insurance industry. But to customers, Liverpool Victoria has surely destroyed much of its heritage. It has certainly moved a very long way from the vision that Frank Field appeared to have.

But then, the Government too has moved away from Mr Field's ideas. Now, as it bombards us with plans for various pension and savings schemes, the main providers remain destined to be the major financial institutions, many of whom have now had their wrists slapped for mis-selling. They may have learnt their lesson, but the regulators would do well not to bank on it.

Oasis in Christmas trading desert

The effort to turn WH Smith into a go-go stock continues. Yesterday the company was boasting that its Internet book sales in December were up a whopping 170 per cent. Sadly, the reality is still a few volumes short of a library: Internet sales since September were just £1.7 million. For a company that last year had sales of more than £2.7 billion, the effect on the bottom line is going to be hard to spot.

But Smith cannot be blamed for trying to look on the bright side when the reality was less exciting. Sales grew by 2 per cent over Christmas, but the store space had been increased by 1 per cent. When you come down from the Web to reality, life on the high street remains difficult.

Yet there are still those who can defy the gloom. Kingfisher shares bounded ahead yesterday as the company revealed that enthusiasm for le DIY is generating double-figure sales growth in its French business, Castorama.

Oasis, too, had good news to report, with sales up more than 20 per cent overall, or 11 per cent stripping out the contribution from new stores. The company had the clothes that fashion-conscious customers wanted and held its nerve to ensure that it sold as many as possible at full price.

Most retailers have now owned-up to how they fared over Christmas, but since they opt to report on trading periods varying from weeks to many months, comparisons are almost meaningless. Oasis, however, looks like a clear winner.

Surefooted Swiss

THE Zurich stock exchange has 57 members but, like Heinz, does not intend to stop at that number. The exchange is keen to recruit London members and has made a fine start with its flattering assertion that London will remain the financial centre of Europe. It is now seems safe to say that the City has adapted almost seamlessly to the demands of euro-trading, despite being outside euroland. Presumably, the careful Swiss just wanted to be sure before they launched their recruitment drive.

Powerscreen reveals informal approaches

By Adam Jones

POWERSCREEN International, the engineering company based in Northern Ireland, received informal approaches from other companies as it recovered from disastrous accounting irregularities.

Powerscreen, the share price of which collapsed after it admitted the crisis last year, said the contact never constituted takeover talks and therefore did not require a Stock Exchange statement.

Brian Kearney, the new chief executive, said: "Over the past 12 months, there have been various discussions with people of all types."

Mr Kearney was presenting interim results that were passed without qualification by Arthur Andersen, which took over as auditor from KPMG.

Powerscreen instructed Herbert Smith, the City law firm, to investigate whether it had grounds to sue KPMG or three former directors — Shay McKeown, Pat Dooey and Barry Cosgrove — over the irregularities at its former Matbro subsidiary.

The "black hole" meant Matbro lost £61 million in 1997/1998 instead of a budgeted £11 million profit.

It is thought that Powerscreen is looking closely at using arbitrators rather than the courts for any settlement, in an attempt to clear the matter up as quickly as possible. The Serious Fraud Office is investigating the irregularities.

John Craig, chairman, said he thought there would not be any litigation directed against Powerscreen itself as a result of the problems.

He said the company's dealer network in the US had remained strong, despite the turmoil. Many of the US dealers were, or are, personal friends of the three departed directors, said Mr Craig.

Confidence in the US was also strengthened by the federal Government's commitment to an expanded road-building programme, which could provide opportunities for its rock crushing equipment.

Mr Kearney said Powerscreen was no longer in a costly standstill arrangement with its banks. It now has a total facility of £36.25 million to draw on. Its disposal programme meant net debt is now about £14.1 million, down from £53.4 million last March.

Powerscreen had to pay a further £1.5 million during the period to professional advisers, including lawyers, accountants and public relations consultants, to clear up the accounting mess, which Mr Craig has likened to a field full of Powerscreen tractors going missing. The company has paid about £5.5 million in fees so far. It expects the final bill to reach about £7 million.

Powerscreen made profits of £7.4 million before tax, on sales of £147.5 million. Earnings per share were 6.53p. Accurate comparisons with the previous year are not possible because of the accounting chaos.

No interim dividend will be paid. Powerscreen shares closed at 121½p, a fall of 4½p on the day.

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Pilkington eases fears over Brazil

SHARES in Pilkington, the glassmaker, rose yesterday after it put a figure on its exposure in Brazil, easing investors' fears (Adam Jones writes).

Pilkington said the 35 per cent fall in the value of the Brazilian real would reduce its working capital in Brazil by £15 million.

It has plate glass manufacturing activities there as well as plants to convert the glass into car windscreens or building products.

One analyst said Pilkington would be able to use the devaluation to its advantage by exporting in US dollars.

Pilkington also confirmed that results for the first nine months of the year were "in line with management's expectations" when measured at constant exchange rates.

The shares, which were 148p last May, rose 3p to 54p.

Capital shares sink as it calls off bid talks

By Dominic Walsh

SHAREHOLDERS of Capital Corporation, the London casino operator, saw their hopes of hitting the jackpot dashed yet again yesterday as the company called a halt to talks with potential bidders.

In a statement, the group said that, in the absence of any formal or indicative offers at a high enough level, it had decided to "end the period of uncertainty by ceasing all discussion".

It added: "The company no longer considers itself to be in an offer period."

Its shares slid 5½p lower to 54p — valuing the group at just £55 million — compared to the 100p-a-share investors had been hoping for after its announcement in October that it had received a number of approaches.

It is also a far cry from the £180 million bid from London Clubs International in February 1997 which was rejected by Capital and eventually blocked by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The list of suitors this time around is believed to have included a management buyout led by David Gray, its casinos and development director, and a joint move by Ladbroke and Stakis.

Peter McNally, its former joint managing director, is also thought to have held talks with the board.

Capital's three casinos — Crockford's, the Colony Club and the Cromwell Mint — are currently suffering from the scarcity of Asian and Middle Eastern high-rollers.

WHS sees book sales grow 5%

WH SMITH has started to claw back its share of the book market, with sales growing by 5 per cent in the shops and by 70 per cent through its Internet division (Fraser Nelson writes).

The company, which became Europe's largest name in online bookselling when it bought The Internet Bookshop in June, said sales through the Internet are now £1.7 million.

The company has said it will be launching its Internet package in the spring.

Overall, like-for-like sales growth was 1 per cent in the 19 weeks to January 9, in line with expectations.

This accelerated to 2 per cent during the last nine weeks, but will still be sharply behind the 6 per cent growth achieved in Christmas 1997/8.

Commentary, this page

Lessons learnt: Dominic Lavelle, right, with Michael Bennett, the chairman

Oasis back in fashion, but profits may suffer

By Fraser Nelson

OASIS, the women's fashion chain that admitted to a series of retailing mistakes last year, has claimed a successful recovery with underlying sales up 11 per cent over Christmas (See Commentary, this page).

Sales of its autumn/winter range were up 21 per cent after it gave up experimenting with new lines and stocked up on core clothes instead.

Dominic Lavelle, finance director, said: "We had one bad season where there was too much breadth and not enough depth in the range. We've learnt the lessons from last year, and applied them."

The figures — for the 25 weeks to January 23 — took in a flat December but a sharp rise in January. Mr Lavelle said that the company had to rely on heavy discounting to shift much of its December and January range, and that its profits suffered as a result.

The City thinks this may mean about £1 million in lost profits, and analysts downgraded year-end profits to £13.2 million (£14.2 million). The shares were unchanged at 166½p yesterday.

Air France poised for cut-price sell-off

From Adam Sage
in Paris

THE French Government yesterday launched the privatisation of Air France with an admission that it would recoup less than a fifth of the money it has pumped into the state-owned carrier this decade.

The Finance Ministry hopes to raise between Fr3 billion (£319 million) and Fr4 billion, reducing the Government's holding from 94 per cent to just over 50 per cent. A tranche of about 17.91 per cent will be floated on the Paris bourse next month.

The airline's implied value of between Fr15.35 billion and Fr18.16 billion is well below the figures proposed by banks advising on the sale. However, Air France's troubled history, punctuated by industrial action and heavy state handouts, means investors may be reluctant to subscribe for the shares.

Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the Finance Minister, hopes the price cut will persuade institutional investors to overcome their reticence at investing in what remains an indebted nationalised company.

The partial privatisation will leave the state with a stake of about 63 per cent, although this will fall to about 53 per cent by 2003 after the distribution of free shares. M Strauss-Kahn has ruled out further share sales.

Incentive plan lights Luminar

By Dominic Walsh

LUMINAR, the bar and nightclub operator, has launched a series of employee incentive schemes that could allow management and staff to grab almost 20 per cent of the company.

It said the proposals, which include share option schemes and incentive warrants, were designed to tie in its best people and were fully supported by 43 per cent shareholder Mercury Asset Management.

Luminar said the schemes were crucial given that "key executives in the industry are being offered substantial equity-based incentives". It added: "The proposals have been structured to motivate and reward key executives and employees, subject to pre-set performance targets."

Including the share options granted at the time of Luminar's flotation in 1996, the various schemes could deliver 18.56 per cent of the company's share capital to its employees. Since flotation, its market capitalisation has grown from £30 million to almost £140 million.

The announcement of the incentives, which would crystallise should Luminar become subject to a takeover, raised a few eyebrows in the City, given that Luminar has recently been linked to a possible bid from First Leisure Corporation.

However, analysts believe Luminar is more likely itself to become the predator. In a newsletter due this week, Douglas Jack, leisure analyst at Henry Cooke Lumsden, argues that Luminar would be better off launching a takeover of Northern Leisure, the nightclub operator. "The two businesses would fit well together. They are both quality late-night operators in provincial towns and cities," he says.

Northern Leisure's shares jumped 12½p to 115½p yesterday, while Luminar gained 10p to 675p.

*** worth buying

STOCK MARKET MICHAEL CLARK

Pilkington strengthens despite crack in profits

THE devaluation of the Brazilian real has left a £15 million crack in profits at **Pilkington**, Britain's biggest glassmaker.

In spite of this, the shares rose 3p to 54p as another round of takeover speculation swept the market.

It has been a remarkable week for Pilkington which saw its shares hit a fresh low of 51p on Monday, as the market got wind that the collapse in the Brazilian currency was going to cost the company dearly. Brazil is one of its biggest markets.

Despite the hit Charterhouse Tilney, the broker, is telling clients to "accumulate" and reckons the concerns over South America are having a disproportionate effect on the share price.

By contrast, City speculators like to remind anyone who will listen that the group is vulnerable to a bid. BTR tried it back in the 1980s and failed. Anyone making a similar move now would have to pay only a fraction of the price. Brokers say Saint Gobain is favourite to make such a move.

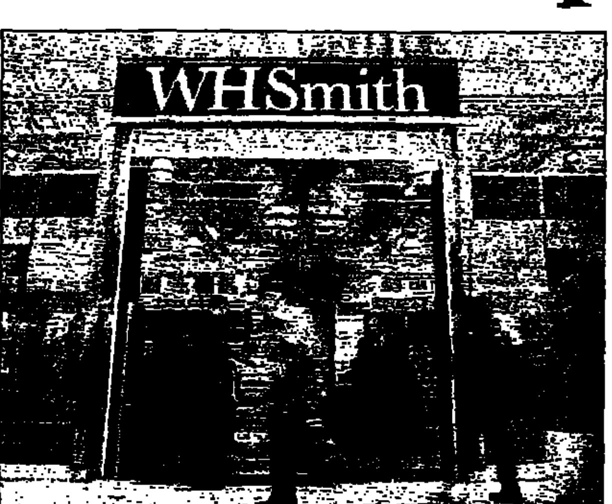
Share prices generally were never able to maintain their early pace with Wall Street also squandering an early mark-up. The FTSE 100 index, up 103 points at one stage, closed 9.3 down at 5,876.4. The FTSE 250 index climbed 46.5 to 4,903.3, buoyed by another spate of takeover speculation.

ICI was the best performer among the top 100 companies, jumping 45½p to 549½p ahead of results next week that are expected to show another downturn in profitability. Traders are taking positions to see if the company maintains the dividend.

Kingfisher was a firm market, adding 42p to 628p after another upbeat trading statement, and **Reed International** climbed 41¾p to 571¾p with traders linking it to the latest craze for Internet stocks.

There was a positive response to the latest trading statement from **WH Smith** with the price climbing 7½p to 597½p. Like-for-like growth during the key Christmas period was up 1 per cent and sales overall showed signs of strengthening.

British Telecom dropped 26p to 917p as word went round that ABN Amro Hoare Govett, the broker, had been telling clients to switch into **Vodafone**, up 23p at £11.82½. Only last week, Hoare set a target price of £16 for Vodafone.



WH Smith saw a positive response to its latest trading statement with the share price climbing 7½p to 597½p

Lehman Brothers, the US securities house, has joined the **Pearson** bandwagon and initiated coverage of the shares by setting a target price of £15. The price fell 10p to £13.81 after hitting a high on Tuesday.

The speculators were again giving chase in **Laird Group** with the price, 26½p higher at 199p, closing below its best of the day after touching 212½p.

There has been a rash of corporate activity among the automotive engineers this week with **LucasVarity**, 2½p lighter at 283½p, facing the prospect of two US bidders, while Adwest Automotive has already accepted an offer of 150p a share from Dura Automotive of the US.

The speculators claim Laird is being stalked by Fullarton, another US automotive components group. Word is Fullarton would have to offer in excess of 250p a share for the bid to succeed.

Dr Alan Weeks, chairman of **Weeks Group**, has splashed out £675,000 acquiring 300,000 shares at 225p. It takes his holding to 38.1 million, or 26.67 per cent. The wife of director Peter Griffith has bought 225,000 shares at 225p. Weeks was unchanged at 2¼p.

Peterhouse Group was steady at 107p, as David Jackson, chairman, spent £216,000 topping up his stake. He has bought 20,000 shares at 108p, taking his total holding to 1.97 million, or 7.48 per cent. Philip Brierley, a director, has sold 100,000 shares at 107p, reducing his stake to 1.07 million, or 4.07 per cent.

Elsewhere in the construction sector, **Ashtead Group** shaded ½p to 169p. Henry Staunton, a director, has acquired 25,000 shares at 171p. He now accounts for 45,000 shares, or less than 1 per cent.

Shares of **Waste Recycling** were suspended at 456p pending completion of the merger with Yorkshire Environmental Global Waste Management.

AIM-listed **Systems Integrated Research** seemed to enjoyed a late reaction to Tuesday's interim results with the price surging 8½p to 19½p in a thin market.

Recognition Systems Group fell 3p to 12¾p as the rump of its recent rights issue was placed in the marketplace. A total of 3.5 million shares were placed at 10p each.

☐ *GILT-EDGED:* The bond market recovered an opening fall to close mixed on the day with longer-dated issues enjoying modest gains, while shorts were left nursing small falls. Dealers said prices fluctuated in a narrow range with interest concentrated on the auction of index-linked stock. A total of £450 million of Treasury index-linked 2024 was covered a comfortable 1.83 times.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt fell 10p to £120.11 as the total number of contracts completed reached 29,000. Among conventional issues, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 finished 3p up at £107.84, while at the shorter end Treasury 7 per cent 2002 ended 3p lower at £153.

☐ **NEW YORK:** Shares were mixed in morning trading as an opening surge lost steam amid profit-taking. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was down 26.00 at 9,298.58.

TURNING THE TAP

Source: Datastream

FTSE 350 water price index / FTSE all-share index (rebased)

3900 3800 3700 3600 3500 3400 3300 3200 3100 3000 2900 2800

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Nov Dec Jan Feb

THE water companies struggled to make headway in a falling market.

Hyder rose 2½p to 814p, Thames 1p to £10.80, and Yorkshire Water 2p to 512½p. But there were losses for Anglian, 4½p to 768p, Severn Trent, 5p to 940p, and United Utilities, 8p to 773p.

Just over a year ago, the utilities were the darlings of the stock market. Their lucrative dividends and the constant flurry of corporate activity kept the pot boiling. Now investors are prepared to plough their money into telecoms, drug companies and financials, while the water companies take a back seat.

Credit Lyonnais Securities, the broker, remains upbeat. It says there is still plenty to play for, despite the constant regulatory interference that has cast a shadow over the sector.

Laing reckons the upside for the sector is about 25 per cent and tips both Anglian Water and United Utilities as the best stocks in the sector to follow.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):	
Dow Jones	9298.58 (-26.00)
S&P Composite	1252.46 (-0.15)
Tokyo:	
Nikkei Average	14450.06 (+68.05)
Hong Kong:	
Hang Seng	9719.66 (+209.83)
Amsterdam:	
AEX Index	531.69 (+5.05)
Sydney:	
AO	2851.4 (+23.5)
Frankfurt:	
DAX	5061.18 (+74.38)
Singapore:	
Straits	1457.44 (+40.30)
Brussels:	
BEL20	3363.52 (-13.53)
Paris:	
CAC-40	4098.10 (+26.82)
Zurich:	
SKA Gen	1434.60 (-0.20)
London:	
FT 30	3498.4 (+14.8)
FTSE 100	5876.4 (-9.3)
FTSE 250	4903.3 (+46.5)
FTSE 350	2774.1 (+0.3)
FTSE Eurotop 100	2729.19 (+5.52)
FTSE All-Share	2677.42 (+0.76)
FTSE Non Financials	2750.36 (+1.37)
FTSE Fixed Interest	158.30 (-0.02)
FTSE Govt Secs	116.93 (-0.11)
Bargains	69500
SEAQ Volume	1205.3m
US$	1.6522 (-0.0074)
Euro	0.6963 (-0.0012)
£:SDR	1.1828
Exchange Index	100.3 (+0.3)
Bank of England official close (4pm)	
RPI	164.4 Dec (2.8%) Jan 1987=100
RPIX	162.4 Dec (2.6%) Jan 1987=100

RECENT ISSUES

AIM VCT	100	...	
Abbey Natl Dublin Inv	89	...	
BFS O'seas Inc & Gwth Cap	97½	...	
BFS O'seas Inc & Gwth Inc	118½	–	½
Close Bros Dev VCT	90	...	
Five Arrws Uts Cv Ln 2040	105¼	+	3
Jupiter En Zero Dv Pf	108	–	¼
Jupiter Enhanced Inc	97¼	+	¼
Singer & Frd AIM VCT	100	...	
Virtual Internet	265	+	10
Yeoman II Equity Units	100	...	
Yeoman II Inv Tst Cap	5½	–	¼
Yeoman II Inv Tst Inc	96¼	+	¾
Yeoman II Zero Div Pf	116¼	...	

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:

Stock	Close	Chng	Chng%
McKechnie	377½	+ 14	+ 3.8
Dragon Oil	28	+ 11¾	+ 72.3
Coats Viyella	35¼	+ 5¾	+ 19.4
Plysu	124½	+ 20	+ 19.1
Six Hundred	67½	+ 10½	+ 18.4
Laird	199	+ 26½	+ 15.3
Booker	53	+ 7	+ 15.2
Cityview	30¼	+ 3¾	+ 14.1
Senior Eng	119	+ 13½	+ 12.7
Northern	115½	+ 12½	+ 12.1
Intelligent Env	101½	+ 10½	+ 11.5
Elec Retail Sys	150	+ 15	+ 11.1
BTP	357½	+ 32	+ 9.8
Ash Central	397½	+ 35	+ 9.6
TI	350	+ 30	+ 9.3
Morgan Cble	188½	+ 16	+ 9.2
BBA	385	+ 32	+ 9.0
ICI	549½	+ 45½	+ 9.0
BTG	310	+ 25	+ 8.7
Dorling Kind	326½	+ 25	+ 8.2
JJB Sports	290	+ 21½	+ 8.0
Acorn	122	+ 9	+ 7.9

FALLS:

Stock	Close	Chng	Chng%
Lorien	104	– 16	– 13.3
Kalamazoo	32½	– 4	– 10.9
Jones Stroud	145	– 15	– 9.3
Capital Corpn	54	– 5½	– 9.2
Business Post	510	– 50	– 8.9
Arena Leis	16	– 1½	– 8.5
Acal	355	– 30	– 7.7
Ashanti	523½	– 43	– 7.5
Estates Agency	450	– 35	– 7.2
Aortech	72½	– 5	– 6.4
Northamber	150	– 9½	– 5.9
Nord Anglia	168½	– 10½	– 5.8
Marlborough Int	202½	– 12½	– 5.8
Northern Rock	497½	– 30½	– 5.7
Kelsey Ind	345	– 20	– 5.4
Br Energy	684½	– 39	– 5.3
Abbey Nat	1255	– 66	– 4.9

TEMPUS

No Northern lights

SO NORTHERN ROCK may securitise future mortgage business. Securitisation, the offloading of bundles of home loans to bond markets, is routine practice for US mortgage banks. The savings produced by this manoeuvre reduces the cost of the average mortgage by a third. But Northern Rock's potential embrace of securitisation is more a function of its lack of capital, than it is a desire to bring down the cost of financing. While its bigger rival Halifax has multibillion-pound cash resources, Northern Rock has only £150 million. Indeed, it has turned away business for lack of funds.

In yesterday's results there was more worry for shareholders because even without securitisation — a process which could hit revenues — Northern's net interest margin, the key measure of profitability, fell from 1.92 per cent to 1.70 per cent. The declining profitability in the bank's core business is partly explained by the intense competition among home loan providers. But it also reflects the fact that Northern is attracting minimal business from first-time buyers, who are more profitable than next-time buyers or remortgage business. They are less flighty, too. But in 1998, first-time buyers accounted for just 12 per cent of Northern's new business, compared with 16 per cent in the previous year. By contrast, remortgages rose from 37 per cent to 47 per cent of new lending.

Private individuals — beneficiaries of the demutualisation — can still count on Northern as a reliable home for a smallish slug of long-term savings. But with the housing market looking distinctly moribund this year, active investors must look elsewhere for value.

CGU

STARING at the sun causes temporary blindness. CGU's size makes it a big draw for investors but the market was dazzled as it gazed at yesterday's new business figures.

Shares ended the day 3.5 per cent higher at 876.5p and, while an 8 per cent increase in new life and pensions business is far from disastrous, it is by no means brilliant. The life businesses are well managed and big European sales add to the appeal. But the UK dipped in the fourth quarter and the French performance — albeit distorted by the tax changes that made 1997 a bumper year — was poor.

Yes, European markets are gradually deregulating and dropping barriers to cross-border trade. But progress is patchy and in some regions, painfully slow. There are great hopes for burgeoning sales of savings products in this country, too. But the Whitehall policymakers have found that talking about the savings culture is easier than effecting change to promote it.

Moreover, it seems that CGU investors forget that the outlook for general insurance is clouded, and that CGU generates more than half its profits from general insurance. There are still at least two months of winter remaining, leaving plenty of time for nasty claims surprises to crop up. Meanwhile competition is reducing the profitablity of both the general and life sides.

Hold CGU for income attractions — the prospective gross yield is 5 per cent. But if it is growth you want, sell. The underperforming trend is set.

UNDER INSURED

CGU

FTSE all-share index (rebased)

CGU share price

Source: Datastream

p 1250 1200 1150 1100 1050 1000 950 900 850 800 750 700

Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan

Powerscreen

POWERSCREEN has been an ugly dog of a share since the accounting problems of late 1997 shot the firm's reputation to pieces. But it is now scratching at the back door of your portfolio, whining and pleading to be let back into the warm.

Powerscreen is an engineer based in Northern Ireland. It makes heavy plant, for screening, crushing and handling construction materials. Yesterday's results were encouraging, mainly because they were unremarkable and came with an unqualified opinion from Arthur Andersen, its new auditor.

After the limbo created by the shocking accounting shambles that surfaced a year ago, this shows that the new management has reimposed some degree of control.

Powerscreen has also emerged from the standstill agreement it negotiated with its banks. This is good because it means cheaper facilities. It is still spending on lawyers, though, trying to claim compensation from the previous auditors, KPMG, and three former executives.

The new execs insist they can grow the business by acquisition. But questions remain about how far they will be allowed to stretch, given the firm's recent history.

Powerscreen is a more likely bid target than bidder: an American firm is said to be lurking. On these grounds the shares are worth buying.

Pearson

PEARSON shares appear to exemplify the notion that long-term earnings prospects justify current share prices which, by historic standards, are very high. The theory is that, while the immediate earnings growth picture is dimmed by the economic slowdown, share prices are fully supported by growth in the golden hinterland beyond.

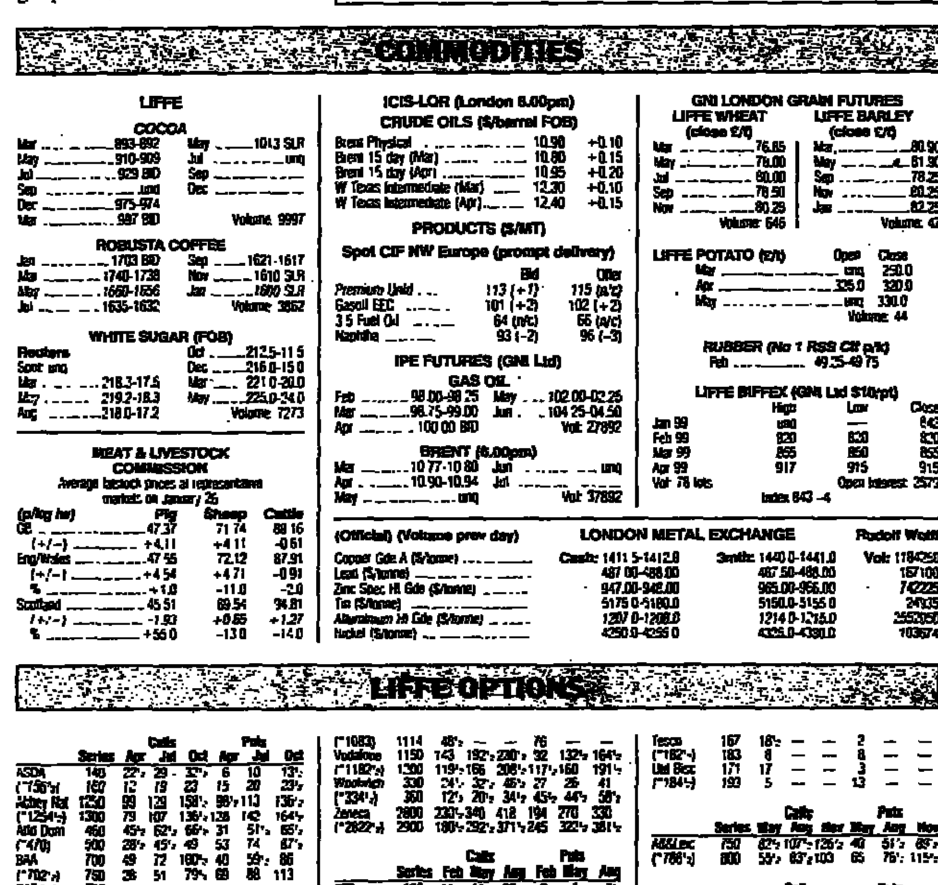
Pearson shares trade at 33 times consensus forecasts of earnings per share for 1998. And at £13.81 the company's ambition to double the market in five years has been achieved with three years to spare. Superficially it looks as if the anticipation of five years' earnings growth has been squeezed into two years' share price advancement.

For many companies such fearless anticipation is foolish. Before the acquisition of Simon & Schuster, it looked that way for Pearson, too. But S&S has changed the Pearson outlook and gives the group much stabler profit foundations.

There is more obvious value in Reed International whose shares — even with a 42p surge yesterday, taking the improvement this calendar year to 21 per cent — rose to an earnings multiple of 20. But with so much achieved and so much still to go it is best to accumulate holdings of both.

EDITED BY ROBERT COLE

COMMODITIES



LIFFE — COCOA

Mar	893-892	May	1013 SLR
May	910-909	Jul	unq
Jul	929 BID	Sep	
Sep	unq	Dec	
Dec	975-974		

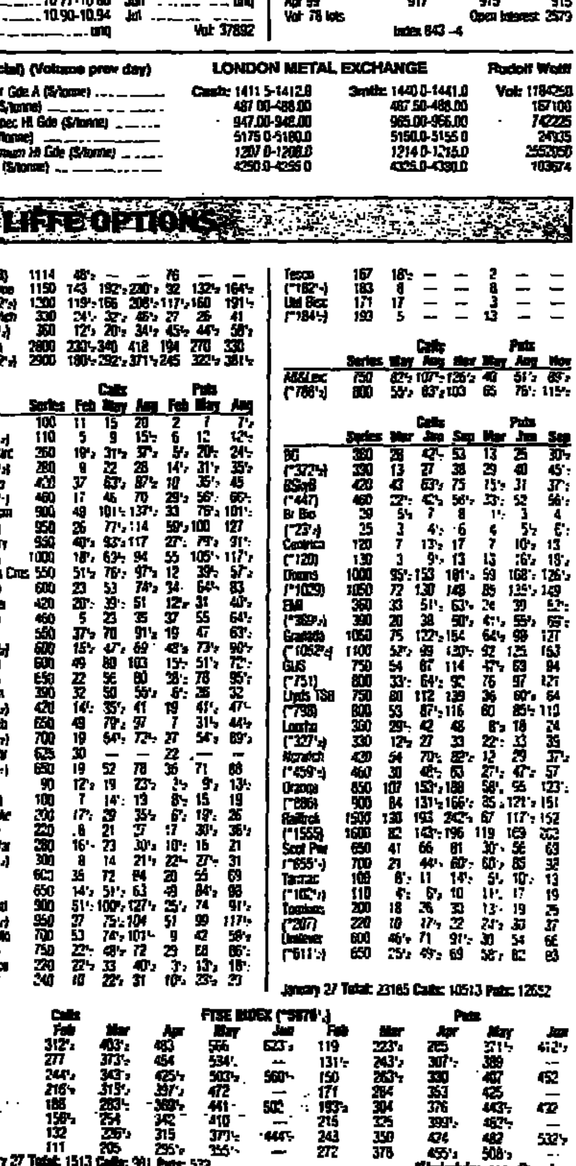
ICIS-LOR (London 6.00pm) CRUDE OILS ($/barrel FOB)

Brent Physical	10.90	+0.10
Brent 15 day (Mar)	10.80	+0.15
Brent 15 day (Apr)	10.95	+0.20
W Texas Intermediate (Mar)	12.30	+0.10
W Texas Intermediate (Apr)	12.40	+0.15

GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES

LIFFE WHEAT (close £/t)		LIFFE BARLEY (close £/t)	
Mar	76.85	Mar	80.90
May	79.00	May	81.90
Jul	80.00	Sep	78.25
Sep	78.50	Nov	80.25
Nov	80.25	Jan	82.25

LIFFE OPTIONS



LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol
Long Gilt	Mar 99	120.15	120.20	119.75	120.11	37578
Previous open interest 104380	Jun 99				120.86	0
German Govt Bond (Bund)	Mar 99				117.70	0
Previous open interest 0						
Five Year Gilt	Mar 99				109.61	0
Previous open interest 63	Jun 99				109.61	0
Italian Govt Bond (BTP)	Mar 99	115.25	115.48	115.15	115.46	11747
Previous open interest 43835						
Japanese Govt Bond (JGB)	Mar 99	130.10	130.18	130.01	130.01	1758
	Jun 99				129.08	0
Three Mth Sterling	Mar 99	94.380	94.430	94.380	94.410	28452
	Jun 99	94.680	94.750	94.660	94.740	25688
Previous open interest 1119877	Sep 99	94.850	94.940	94.850	94.930	21203
Three Mth Euromark	N/A					
Previous open interest 0						
Three Mth Eurolira	N/A					
Previous open interest 0						
Three Mth Euroswiss	Mar 99	98.630	98.670	98.610	98.650	13790
Previous open interest 184001	Jun 99	98.540	98.550	98.520	98.540	4769
Three Mth Euro	Apr 99				97.080	0
Previous open interest 864840	Jun 99	97.130	97.160	97.130	97.160	10931
FTSE 100	Mar 99	5975.0	6010.0	5866.0	5883.0	19101
Previous open interest 184304	Jun 99	5940.0	5940.0	5940.0	5921.5	50

MONEY RATES (%)

Base Rates: Clearing Banks 6 Finance House 7

Discount Market Loans: O/night high 6¼ Low 5¼ Week fixed 6⅛

Treasury Bills (Dis): Buy: 2 mth 5⅜, 3 mth 5¼ Sell: 2 mth 5¼, 3 mth 5⅛

	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Prime Bank Bills (Dis):	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
Sterling Money Rates:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Interbank:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Overnight: open 6¼, close 5½					
Local Authority Deps:	5⅞	n/a	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Sterling CDs:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Dollar CDs:	4.87	n/a	4.87	4.88	5.04
Building Society CDs:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

Currency	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth	Call
Dollar:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Sterling:	6-5⅞	[illegible]	[illegible]	6-5⅞	[illegible]
Euro:	3⅛-3	[illegible]	[illegible]	3-2⅞	3ds-3pr
Yen:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1-par
Canada:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Bain & Co)

Bullion: Open: $285.60-286.10 Close: $284.30-284.80 High: $285.60-286.10 Low: $283.80-284.30 AM: $285.80 PM: $283.80

Krugerrand: $294.00-296.00 (£172.00-174.00)

Platinum: $349.50 (£211.55) **Silver:** $5.125 (£3.105) **Palladium:** $330.00 (£199.75)

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Mid Rates for January 27	Range	Close	1 month	3 Month
Copenhagen	10.673-10.689	10.673-10.686	¼-⅞pr	[illegible]
Euro	1.4352-1.4372	1.4356-1.4368	0.14-0.16ds	0.44-0.47ds
Montreal	2.5095-2.5127	2.5098-2.5136	0.19-0.12pr	0.47-0.34pr
New York	1.6510-1.6525	1.6517-1.6525	0.135-0.115pr	0.325-0.295pr
Oslo	12.307-12.325	12.307-12.325	[illegible]	[illegible]
Stockholm	12.710-12.736	12.714-12.729	[illegible]	[illegible]
Tokyo	190.49-190.78	190.60-190.76	[illegible]	[illegible]
Zurich	2.3064-2.3104	2.3079-2.3104	[illegible]	[illegible]

Source: Extel Premium = pr Discount = ds

DOLLAR RATES

Australia	1.5855-1.5867
Canada	1.5207-1.5217
Denmark	6.4550-6.4600
Euro	1.1510-1.1520
Hong Kong	7.7482-7.7492
Japan	115.11-115.16
Malaysia	3.7900-3.8000
Norway	7.4590-7.4690
Singapore	1.6870-1.6880
Sweden	7.6955-7.7005
Switzerland	1.3950-1.3970

OTHER STERLING

Argentina peso*	1.6530-1.6553
Australia dollar	2.6225-2.6283
Bahrain dinar	0.6170-0.6312
Brazil real*	1.9941-1.9966
Cyprus pound	0.8250-0.8438
Euro	1.4353-1.4375
Finland markka	8.4775-8.6169
Greece drachma	456.75-467.25
Hong Kong dollar	12.8116-12.8211
India rupee	69.57-71.17
Indonesia rupiah	14975.00-15575.00
Kuwait dinar KD	0.4940-0.5054
Malaysia ringgit	6.2668-6.2871
New Zealand dollar	3.0797-3.0845
Pakistan rupee	80.40 Buy
Saudi Arabia riyal	5.9575-6.0949
Singapore dollar	2.7895-2.7928
S Africa rand (com)	9.7840-10.0028
U A E dirham	6.0100-6.1486

Barclays Treasury * Lloyds Bank

FTSE 100 VOLUMES

3i	348	Legal & Gn	2,575
ASDA Gp	7,722	Lloyds TSB	5,449
Abbey Ntl	6,794	LucasVarity	30,335
Allnce & Leic	1,211	Marks Spr	12,998
Allied Dom	3,970	Nat Grid	4,874
Allied Zrch	3,484	Nat Power	4,882
Amvescap	4,274	NatWst Bk	4,628
AB Foods	726	Norwich Un	2,447
Bk of Scot	3,703	Orange	1,753
BAA	2,072	P & O	2,843
Barclays	6,165	Pearson	2,793
Bass	1,632	PowerGen	4,457
BG	10,187	Prudential	1,526
Billiton	5,295	Railtrack	1,244
BOC	860	Reckitt Col	1,592
Boots	2,973	Reed Intl	15,669
BP Amoco	18,589	Rentokil	6,200
BAe	8,027	Reuters	6,688
BA	3,677	Rio Tinto	1,521
Brt Am Tob	2,841	Rolls Royce	5,584
Brit Energy	3,512	Ryl & Sun	14,240
BSkyB	3,382	Ryl Bk Scl	1,798
BT	12,882	Safeway	3,150
BTR	16,750	Sainsbury	2,137
CGU	2,478	Schroders	53
COLT Telecom	3,030	Scot & New	2,055
Cable Wire	8,236	Scot Sthn Engy	1,538
Cadbury	2,102	Scot Power	4,421
Carlton Cms	3,763	Securicor	2,138
Centrica	11,726	Sern Trent	659
Compass Gp	3,082	Shell Trans	50,162
Diageo	7,909	Siebe	22,700
Dixons Grp	2,833	Smiths Ind	967
EMI	3,163	Smith Bch	12,767
Gallaher	1,802	Stagecoach	1,609
Gen Elec	13,131	Std Chartd	2,751
GKN	1,447	Sun Life	188
Glaxo Well	9,113	TeleWest	11,845
Granada	3,815	Tesco	29,440
GUS	5,817	Thames W	1,122
GRE	2,288	Tomkins	19,970
Hanson	1,550	Unilever	8,580
ICI	5,891	Utd News	7,631
Imperial Tob	2,744	Utd Utilities	1,113
HSBC	1,883	Vodafone	24,762
Halifax	4,378	WPP	5,446
Hays	1,738	Whitbread	1,014
Kingfisher	5,811	Williams	6,200
Ladbroke	3,681	Woolwich	4,634
Land Secs	1,557	Zeneca	3,638

Blair dreams in pay wonderland

Here is a true story. Once upon a time, there was an ageing business tycoon, who built a huge corporation from small beginnings. Along this hard road, he had become a fearless advocate of free market forces. He had also learnt to count pennies.

His female secretary, who had worked for him many years, seemed content with her modest salary: he was a likeable fellow and the job was exciting. Her boss, a man of generous spirit but who liked to vet costs with a magnifying glass, did not see why any other secretary in his organisation should be paid more.

Other top secretarial jobs soon became hard to fill. Even routine posts increasingly stayed vacant. Middle managers, who had to keep the show on the road, resorted to temporary staff supplied by agencies at much higher cost. They became *de facto* permanent.

The relevant trade union, which had a closed shop, saw that its power was being eroded. It set up its own agency, which became the main labour conduit and a modest but useful channel for would-be immigrants from many lands.

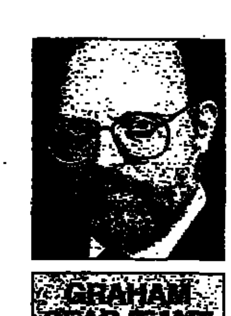
Only when the great man passed on could managers fully unravel the whole complex and super-expensive network, at great industrial relations cost. This doughty champion of markets failed to grasp how the laws of supply and demand worked in his own office.

This myopic madness now afflicts our own Government, at huge and growing cost to taxpayers. Ministers are never happier than when they laud the primacy of market forces. Amazingly, however, the laws of supply and demand are deemed to stop at the the traffic lights north of Whitehall. By some magnificent illusion, what governs the outside world does not apply to government. It is inconvenient, so it it does not exist.

Yesterday, this illusion surfaced at the Department of Agriculture, where Nick Brown proposed a commercial poll tax to fund a Food Standards Agency. Did he consult the small business minister? Did he see that he would favour giant corporations? Did he assume that supply was impervious to cost?

Gordon Brown provides a more notorious example. Persuading more people to save for private pensions has such a high priority that the Treasury cannot resist meddling with the efforts of the Department of Social Security. Yet the Chancellor blithely taxed pension funds by an extra £5 billion a year now and much more later, providing the greatest single disincentive to pension saving of modern times.

The most malign characteristic of new Labour is the assumption that ordinary people are ignorant and stupid and will not notice, if wise leaders tell us what to do. Ordinary people are not as ignorant as ministers like to think in things that matter personally. We tend to notice, for instance, if the job down the road pays twice as much.



GRAHAM SEARJEANT

This official suspension of the laws of supply and demand was never more glaring than when Tony Blair lectured the public sector over pay on Tuesday. The National Health Service is said to be short of 13,000 nurses, in spite of efforts to recruit cheap labour from abroad. There are similar though lesser shortages among teachers and in the armed forces.

The logical cause is that they are not offered enough pay. Yes, concerted leaks tell us that nurses at entry level can expect a rise of 11 per cent, but nurses as a whole are supposedly to be offered 4.7 per cent, which is less than last year's rise in money output per head, and most others a bit less than that.

Mr Blair, junking the inconvenient laws, evidently takes the line that the problem is one of morale. So he told a audience from caring groups that their sense of public duty could be "awe-inspiring".

"What made you choose this career" he said " is what made me go into politics — a chance to serve and make a difference. It is not just a job for you, it is a vocation". Thanks for the praise, how about some cash, union leaders understandably responded.

What nonsense. Vocation is not limited to the public sector. Even rich barristers can be dedicated.

Thousands of nurses care about the patients and not the money, in the tradition of Florence Nightingale. They would nurse for less than they are paid. Sadly, the National Health Service needs many more thousands than that. The laws of supply and demand suggest that the price of labour is set by the amount needed to attract the last one you need to make up the numbers, rather than those who are in it for love.

Market conditions have changed since nursing was one of the few professions open to women. Perversely, it is degraded as a career. Ms. Nightingale was no sweetie-pie. In the sexual caste system she inspired, matrons at the apex of nursing ruled hospitals. Today, hospitals are run by administrators, often male accountants. Women can do better elsewhere.

Thanks to Mr Blair's idealistic moratorium on economic laws, nurses who need more income to pay taxes levied on low pay are often better off quitting the NHS, signing up with an agency and going back to the NHS as a temp. Many have done so, helping hospitals to ratchet up their pay bills.

While the Home Office spends huge sums of our money locking up some would-be economic migrants, the NHS is happily spending just as much to recruit many thousands more from the rest of Europe and far beyond. Has anyone told Jack Straw? Perhaps those countries have been generating ludicrous surpluses of trained nurses. Perhaps we are just exploiting their forethought.

Of one thing you may be sure. The longer ministers continue to insist that laws of supply and demand do not apply to them, the more it will cost us in taxes.

Times they are a-changing, and so are the trade unions

The days of beer and sandwiches at No 10 could be making a comeback, writes Christine Buckley

Today, with the Fairness at Work Bill, the Government will deliver the most wide-ranging package of employment rights for a generation. But the organisations that have long campaigned for these rights, the trade unions, are seeing their membership falling.

It is a trend that has not been arrested by the election of a Labour Government nor its promised restoration of many union rights. Last year, members of TUC affiliated unions fell from 6.9 million to 6.8 million and from 31 per cent of the workforce to 30 per cent. At its peak — in 1980 — union membership stood at 12 million. Further numbers will be lost this year as the recession in manufacturing and textiles claims more victims.

The fall is not a shock to many unions. The days when they could hold a nation to ransome — such as during the miners strikes in 1972 and 1974 or the winter of discontent in 1978/79 — have long gone. Trade union leaders are no longer invited to Downing Street for beer and sandwiches. They realised that the workplace has changed and now they are attempting to adjust.

One of the largest factors in the fall is that manufacturing — a traditional stronghold for unions — has declined. Britain now has one of the smallest sections of the workforce employed in manufacturing in the European Union. Big employers, such as the power industries and telecommunications, have been privatised, cutting countless jobs.

More people are employed on short contracts, part-time work and zero-hour contracts. Personal contracts have reduced the role of unions to set pay levels. More work is subcontracted, franchised or outsourced and more people are working from home.

The culture of the workplace has changed hugely. Fewer people believe in jobs for life, more are willing to change jobs to progress careers. The protective function of unions will always be an important part of their role, but it is becoming less so. Some older workers remain in unions through sentiment. Young employees do not necessarily feel that pull.

Declining union membership has reduced the organisations' incomes. Squeezed for cash, some have merged. Talks are being held across a number of unions. Soon, members will be asked to vote on the three-way merger of Bifu, UNiFI and the NatWest Staff association.

But, frustratingly, many merged unions have found their membership has also fallen, with workers feeling they are no longer part of a relevant organisation. Some complain that massive unions that sprawl across a variety of industries are empowering more for their leaders than members.

The solution to the falling union ranks would therefore seem not to be in retrenchment. Transformation is more likely to be the key.

Tony Cooper, general secretary of the Engineers and Managers Association, believes unions must behave more like businesses. They need to find their markets and offer a greater range of services. There is no reason, he thinks, why a union should not operate like the AA, for example, in order to build up numbers. Members could choose from various levels of service, from a basic provision to an all-frills option.

Old school: Len Murray was TUC General Secretary from 1973-84

"Unions need to be more competitive and more relevant," Cooper says. "We need to offer services that people want. There is a decline in membership that will continue unless we have something to offer."

The AEEU, one of Britain's bigger unions with 678,135 members, has made one of the biggest moves into providing additional services. Last year it launched the first stakeholder pension scheme with Friends Provident. It was designed to give members in companies without pension plans an opportunity to join a scheme that had the benefits of a large organisation. The AEEU is also looking at extending its legal services to members' families and could operate a sabbatical system for members to do voluntary services overseas.

Ken Jackson, general secretary, says: "There has been a big shift away from traditional employment and we have got to fundamentally rethink the way we go about things. There is an opportunity to increase membership with the Fairness at Work Bill but we have to operate in ways that move the unions into the 21st century."

John Edmonds, the GMB's leader, is optimistic about recruitment prospects. He believes another two million can easily be added if recruitment officers are vigorous. But, because of changing patterns in the workplace, new recruits may come in ones and twos rather than the wholesale addition of a workplace.

Some of his recruiting officers are on the youth trail. Last year the GMB went to 16 music festivals and have found a rallying cry in the minimum wage. Young people, aggrieved that the Government has imposed a reduced rate for younger workers, have become more interested in the union movement, says Mr Edmonds.

He also sees the fluctuating nature of work as an opportunity for recruitment rather than an obstacle. "People are becoming more suspicious of managers. They expect to be treated worse by managers in the UK than in any other country in Europe. They are turning to unions for protection."

The TUC is devoting much of its campaign resources to a recruitment drive. Its organising academy, which was set up at a cost of £2 million to train recruitment officers, is also placing much emphasis on targeting young members.

The TUC is keen to reposition itself fully as a modern force in the employment arena. But some of its constituent unions do not always portray the same picture. Unions have tended to be inherently conservative groups, disliking radical change.

Those who want to modernise the movement are frustrated by the attitude of more traditional barons, complaining that they behave just like barons, pining for the old days when they could bring a company — or indeed a government — to its knees with strikes. They say that while John Monks, the TUC General Secretary, is one of the most forward-looking and realistic union leaders, his hands are largely tied by some members of the governing body.

The TUC shares Mr Edmonds's optimism that once the Fairness at Work rights are in place and working then unions will be buoyed by new interest from potential members.

A spokesman said the right of representation by a union when an employee deals with managers — which comes regardless of recognition in the workplace — would have a big impact. He said that because of the shift in attitudes towards partnership, the unions could hope for long-term membership gain by "embracing new industries".

The unions, while welcoming the reforms of the Fairness at Work legislation, have criticised the Government for watering down the original proposals. They complain that some ministers wanted to distance the Government from the union movement to a ridiculous degree.

But the frostiness of the Government to its traditional paymastersis not just new Labour dogma to keep the unions at arm's length. It also stems from a desire by the Government not to be closely associated with a loser — a once powerful body that is diminishing.

However, this is a Government sensitive to public opinion and trends almost to the point of neurosis. If the unions were to reinvigorate themselves effectively, they would probably find themselves more warmly welcomed by hitherto indifferent ministers. The era of beer and sandwiches could yet return.

TUC MEMBERSHIP AND GENERAL SECRETARIES

Millions of members

Fred Bramley | Sir Walter Citrine | Sir Vincent Tewson | George Woodcock | Vic Feather | Len Murray | Norman Willis | John Monks

1998: John Edmonds

0, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14

1930, 1935, 1940, 1945, 1950, 1955, 1960, 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995

Source: TUC

AltaVista, the company you cannot ignore

THOSE who have not heard of AltaVista, Yahoo! or Excite soon will. This week's announcement that AltaVista, part of US computer giant Compaq, is set to follow its two rivals by staging a multi-billion dollar flotation adds weight to the theory that such companies will dominate business life in coming years.

In many ways, the likes of AltaVista, Yahoo! and Excite represent a new breed of media companies. In the early days of the Internet, they were known simply as "search engines" (because they allowed academics to hunt for obscure information on the World-wide Web), but now prefer to be described as "portals". What they offer is an easy starting point for users of the Internet, and hundreds of jointly branded services.

This is important for many reasons. It is widely believed that if the Internet is to become mainstream, it needs a handful of established starting points, which act like high-tech television networks. Instead of editorialising, such companies are said to "aggregate content".

Yahoo!'s site is a good example. Visitors can either use the company's search facilities, or use its site to go shopping online (for airline tickets or insurance, for example). There is also an excellent (and free) stock market information service, and a Reuters newswire. The company makes money by selling advertising — which can be electronically tailored to match the areas visitors are looking at — and taking a cut out of all online credit card transactions.

For traditional businesses, portals can be extremely helpful in gaining a presence online. For online retailers and information providers, signing a joint venture deal with a company such as AltaVista can be hugely valuable. After all, millions of Internet users already trust the brands of the big three portals, and visit their sites almost every time they go online.

Although many Internet Service Providers (such as America OnLine and, most recently, Dixons) are eager to set-up their own proprietary portals, they have not yet managed to significantly dent the power of AltaVista et al. Most traditional media companies have also failed to create successful alternative portals.

The likes of Yahoo! may face a tough fight, but it is looking increasingly likely that traditional media companies will simply decide to sign more joint ventures with established portals instead of competing head-to-head with them.

Some of the world's largest telecoms and technology companies already appear to believe this, with At Home last week buying Excite for $6.7 billion, and Microsoft this week signing a far-reaching joint venture with AltaVista.

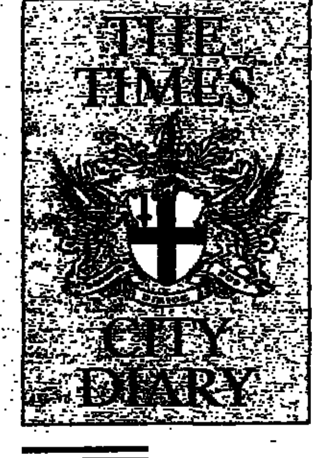
This is still obviously plenty of consolidation to come, but all the evidence so far suggests that Compaq's idea to float AltaVista is a good one.

☐ IT WILL soon become possible to send e-mails from anywhere in the world thanks to a new satellite Internet service from British Telecom. The service, from BT Aeronautical & Maritime (BT A&M), will offer free subscription, and be aimed initially at the energy, shipping and media sectors

☐ DIGITAL ONE, the digital radio consortium led by GWR, owner of Classic FM, this week advertised three new channels for tender. Companies interested in producing programmes for any of the new digital channels — which include soft adult contemporary music; plays, books and comedy; and all-night dance music — have until February 12 to register.

CHRIS AYRES

Deep water



A TALE of woe from Blakeney Management, the aggressive fund linked with George Soros, in a circular to investors apologising for the non-arrival of an update on how the business is performing.

In December, just two days after Blakeney narrowly failed to throw out half the board of Lonrho Africa, explains Miles Morland, the Blakeney boss, "our upstairs neighbours in Chelsea Wharf installed new plumbing using an exciting new 'pop-on' plumbing joint.

"The main feature of this is that it pops off as soon as the plumber goes home," he adds.

"Our alarm summoned us at four in the morning. We called the fire brigade who told us: 'You've got a nasty flood here, guv'.

"We, ankle deep in water, thanked them for this information and asked if they could be so good as to break in upstairs and turn the water off. 'Couldn't do that, squire. That would involve breaking in'."

The flood knocked out three of Blakeney's computers and much of its filing. "We have since managed to blow-dry our Imro reports but business has been disrupted," Morland reports lugubriously.

He ends on a positive note. The next update will be out by mid-February — "unless we suffer a plague of frogs in the interim".

"Cigarettes . . . perfume . . . shares . . ."

NORTHERN ROCK chief executive Leo Finn's first taste of media stardom yesterday was not a success. There being no proper phone line at ABN Amro, the broker, the bureaucrats at Radio 4 insisted he conduct an interview in the radio car, the favoured soap-box of many a Cabinet minister. His first attempt was marred by technical problems. These solved, the car was moved on by the police.

Oh, Carol

IT WOULD be uncharitable to name names, but Carol and Mary at least know who they are. I have a chain e-mail that details probably the most incompetent attempt ever by a headhunter to poach staff.

It begins with an artful request to PA Consulting for the name of a senior marketing manager in life sciences. Carol, who took care not to reveal that she worked for one of the biggest headhunters on the planet, was directed to the relevant person.

The next e-mail was from her boss, Mary, in Dallas. It was a detailed whinge about what a rotten day she was having, how they didn't want anyone too senior for the post and about how a previous interviewee had not worked out but had still cost a fortune in travel expenses.

The e-mail should have gone to Carol. It was probably not a terribly bright idea for Mary to wrongly direct it to PA, whose employee they were both trying to lift.

AS THE Davos gabfest continues, more translations of the corporate-speak that comes out of there from Lewis Lapham, editor of Harper's Magazine, *who attended last year's forum and was not much impressed. For unemployment, read "necessary check on inflation", he says. And civil liberties are better thought of as "favours granted to minorities, criminals, radicals and the undeserving poor. Extremely expensive".*

More or less

SO WHAT of Roger Parry, unstoppable chief executive of More Group, the outdoor poster business sold to the Americans last summer? Is it true he went for the chief executive's job at Carlton Communications, as media gossip has it?

It is indeed. "I was interested to hear what the job was all about," Parry says. "I'm not actually looking."

Instead More, now owned by Clear Channel, a huge American corporation, is hoping to buy Avenir, a big French poster business being sold by Vivendi, the conglomerate that used to be Compagnie Générale des Eaux.

The deal would be worth hundreds of millions of dollars, and Parry, who certainly does not seem to be chafing under the American corporate yoke, says it would have been much more difficult as a quoted company because of the need to raise fresh capital.

Not to mention more expensive, with all those City fees. "All those Cazenove sandwiches, that Slaughter & May cake, the Schroders stewed tea . . ." he muses, sounding like a man who has been there and does not much want to go back.

MARTIN WALLER
city.diary@the-times.co.uk

Sandwiches, cake and tea cannot tempt Roger Parry

BUSINESS LETTER

Consequences of Cruickshank's appointment

From Mr Hugh Kearns

Sir, The appointment of Don Cruickshank to investigate the "competitiveness" of high street banks is a move welcomed by all, except perhaps the banks.

Immediately following the proposed publication of the report, the Year 2000 will happen and the fruits of Mr Cruickshank's current one-and-a-half days a week as Chairman of Action 2000 shoud be revealed in their full glory! We know that the so-called "millennium bug" will hit government and industry, public and private lives, nationally and internationally. The problem is not myth or hype as it is already being experienced, 11 months early. Is Mr Cruickshank "Superman" that he can take on this additional significant role whilst addressing a problem many times larger than most people are capable of imagining?

This appointment is yet another in the Year 2000 saga of our Government acting without fully considering the consequences.

His appointment should be either reconsidered or his Action 2000 position given to a full-time individual immediately.

Yours faithfully,
HUGH KEARNS,
Carpathia Consulting Group,
Business Design Centre,
52 Upper Street, N1 0QH.

Commodity prices to fall further as stockpiles grow

Miners ignore cutback calls

By Paul Armstrong

ANALYSTS attacked the international mining industry yesterday for its failure to curb production despite a sharp fall in commodity prices.

Speaking after the release of another series of strong quarterly production figures by Rio Tinto, the worldwide mining giant, analysts said the industry needed "leadership and discipline."

They pointed to increasing stockpiles on the London Metal Exchange (LME) as evidence of the miners' refusal to address the growing burden of oversupply and gave warning that many commodity prices could have further to fall.

Rio highlighted the industry's predicament with sharply higher production of copper, coal, gold and aluminium in the three months to December 31, 1998.

The figures, with the exception of iron ore and borates, were slightly ahead of City expectations. Coal production soared 53 per cent in the quarter compared with the previous corresponding period to 34.5 million tonnes.

This stemmed from last year's purchase of the Jacobs Ranch mine in America as well as higher production at its Indonesian and Australian operations.

Gold mined jumped 60 per cent to 886,000 ounces and copper mined rose 27 per cent to 238,100 tonnes.

Aluminium production for the quarter was up 5 per cent to 131,700 tonnes but the impact of the Asian economic crisis on Japanese steel mills resulted in iron ore output sliding 4 per cent to 13.2 million tonnes.

Nick Wilson, an analyst with BT Alex Brown, said the growing tonnages were a glaring example of the pressure being exerted on commodity prices by oversupply.

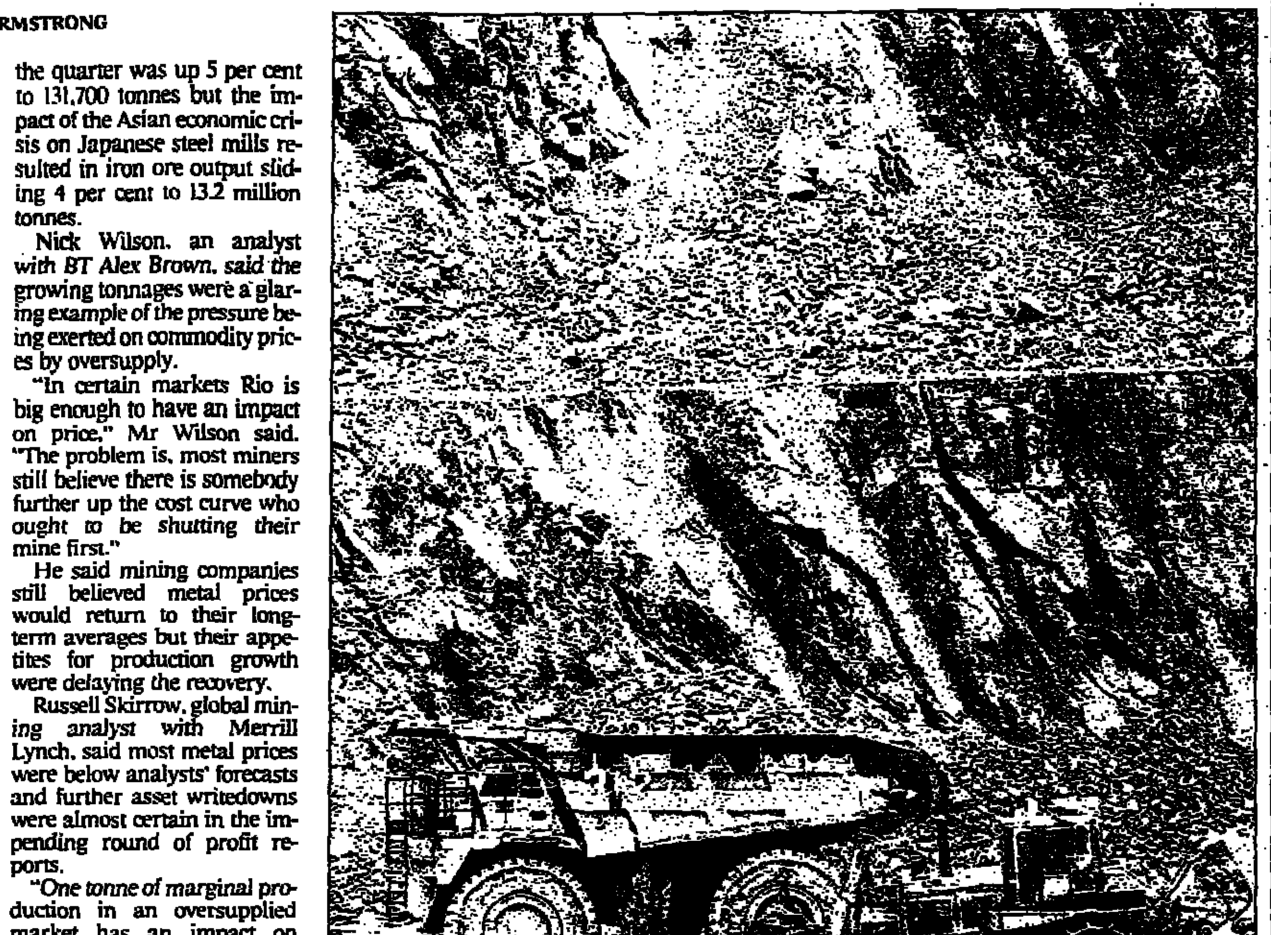
"In certain markets Rio is big enough to have an impact on price," Mr Wilson said. "The problem is, most miners still believe there is somebody further up the cost curve who ought to be shutting their mine first."

He said mining companies still believed metal prices would return to their long-term averages but their appetites for production growth were delaying the recovery.

Russell Skirrow, global mining analyst with Merrill Lynch, said most metal prices were below analysts' forecasts and further asset writedowns were almost certain in the impending round of profit reports.

"One tonne of marginal production in an oversupplied market has an impact on price," Mr Skirrow said.

"It could be that it is better for shareholders not to increase production, but the companies say 'to hell with prices, let's try to force our competition out of the market'."



Analysts say the growing tonnage figures are evidence of the pressure on prices of oversupply

Decline in demand for TVs hits Sony

By Our City Staff

SONY CORP, the Japanese electronics giant, yesterday reported a fall in sales in the three months to December 31, which it attributed to lower demand for the company's television and audio equipment.

Sony said it was only an exceptional securities gain that enabled it to report an 8.3 per cent rise in pre-tax profit to Y232 billion (£1.27 billion) for the quarter.

Revenue was down 3.2 per cent at Y1,948 billion, with the strong yen and lower results from its pictures division also taking a toll.

The results prompted Masayoshi Morimoto, vice-president, to give warning that he was "very concerned" about the prospects in Japan.

Sony blamed increased price competition, lower sales and production falls for the reduced revenue.

However, the company was helped by video sales and strong music sales, with hit releases from Mariah Carey, Celine Dion and George Michael.

Sony forecast pre-tax profit for the full year to March would be Y360 billion — down 21 per cent on the previous year. Net profit is expected to reach Y160 billion, down from its last forecast, and a 28 per cent fall from a year earlier. Revenue is expected to slip 1 per cent to Y6,700 billion.

Repossessions up by 3% on last year

THE number of properties repossessed by mortgage lenders increased by 3 per cent in 1998, compared with the previous year, according to figures published by the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML). The organisation believes the situation could deteriorate this year which means there must be a focus on offering better quality protection insurance for mortgage borrowers. The CML data shows that 33,820 homes were repossessed last year, compared with 32,770 in 1997, although the greater proportion took place in the second half of the year.

Michael Coogan, director general of CML, said: "We must be alert to the possibility of some increase in arrears if, as expected, there is a slowdown in the economy during 1999." The CML underlined that the level of arrears and repossessions will not return to the lower levels of the 1980s. A spokeswoman said: "Owner occupation is higher and the nature of the employments market has changed. It is more difficult to know if you will have a stable income these days." The CML is working with the insurance industry and Government to introduce minimum standards of protection insurance in the case of difficulties with payment.

Ashanti gold record

ASHANTI GOLDFIELDS, the Ghanaian gold miner, posted record gold production of 421,573 ounces in the December quarter. The result lifted the year's output to 1.55 million ounces, a 32 per cent increase from 1997. Cash costs for the final three months were down 11 per cent from the previous corresponding period at $208 per ounce. Ashanti said development of the 400,000-ounce-a-year Geita mine in Tanzania, which it inherited through the takeover of SAMAX, was on course for first production by the end of next year. Geita has resources of 6.4 million ounces and cash costs are forecast to be $171/oz.

SWX opens in London

THE Swiss Exchange (SWX) has opened its first foreign office in Docklands, at Canary Wharf. The bourse said that the move was intended to increase trading volumes by attracting new parties to the exchange, while the London office would also act as a marketing platform for SWX's products and services, especially eurobonds and repurchase instruments. Leo Hug, spokesman for the exchange, said that the move would bring additional liquidity to the Swiss bourse. The SWX has 57 members. Some four or five staff will work in the London office.

GE Capital shake-up

CONSOLIDATION in the UK and European insurance market and the opportunity to sell new products to an ageing population has spurred General Electric Company into reorganising GE Capital, its financial services arm. From today, ten insurance and administrative businesses will operate under the umbrella of GE Insurance Holdings. The new group will be led by Clive Cowdery, chief executive, and includes a number operations including Consolidated Financial Insurance, GE Capital Travel Insurance Services, Pet Protect, Stalwart Assurance and GE Financial Assurance.

T-Online branches out

DEUTSCHE TELEKOM is to offer its T-Online service outside Germany this year after enjoying a sharp increase in the number of domestic users. The service will initially be available in Switzerland and Austria and will then be extended to other countries. Telekom has set up a total of 2,500 points of presence (local phone numbers) in 150 countries to enable T-Online customers to access the service from around the world. The number of T-Online users should reach 2.8 million by the end of January, having risen by 42 per cent to 2.7 million in 1998, Telekom said.

Disney suffers drop in first-quarter profits

By Saeed Shah

WALT DISNEY, the entertainment group, saw profits drop 18 per cent in the first quarter, hampered by high costs of broadcasting American football, lower ratings for ABC's news programmes and slower video sales.

Disney's results were below Wall Street estimates. The decline came despite strong box-office showings from *The Waterboy*, *A Bug's Life* and *Enemy of the State*. There was also rising attendance at its theme parks.

Disney's net profit was $622 million (£375 million), or 30 cents per share, in the three months to December 31, down from $755 million, or 37 cents per share, in the same period a year earlier. Revenue rose 4 per cent to $6.59 billion.

The quarter's results were boosted by the acquisition of a 43 per cent interest in Infoseek, the Internet search engine.

The bright spot was Disney's theme parks and resorts division, where operating profits rose 17 per cent to $335 million.

The results came two weeks after Disney announced that chief executive Michael Eisner's bonus for 1998 was cut by nearly half to $5 million because of sluggish profit growth. Disney was also hurt by the Asian financial crisis, poor box-office performance and costly new ventures.

Euro Disney, its European arm, also confirmed reports yesterday that it is considering building a second theme park on the Disneyland Paris site.

It has launched a feasibility study and has held discussions with the French Government about the second park, which was planned in the original 1987 agreement, to be completed by 2011.

NBM to oust Blockleys directors

NATIONAL Building Materials yesterday requisitioned an extraordinary general meeting of Blockleys, the builder's merchant, to allow shareholders to vote on the removal of the directors and their replacement by the NBM board (Saeed Shah writes).

The company said it now speaks for 44.74 per cent of NBM shares and has received irrevocable undertakings from Eaglet Investment Trust, Telford Investments and Christopher Evans to vote in favour of the restructuring.

AIM-listed NBM last month launched a £13 million hostile bid for Blockleys which is listed on the main market.

Perot to sell 7% stake in flotation

From Oliver August in New York

ROSS PEROT, the Texan billionaire who stood in two US presidential elections as an independent candidate, is floating Perot Systems on the stock market.

Mr Perot, who owns a 45 per cent interest, will sell a 7 per cent stake in his $1 billion (£606 million) information network company, which counts East Midlands Electricity among its biggest customers.

Mr Perot, 68, was founder of EDS, the outsourcing group. He sold EDS to General Motors for $2.5 billion in 1984 and joined the GM board in Detroit for two years but quickly fell out with other directors.

Mr Perot set up Perot Systems as a rival to EDS. Perot Systems is regarded as a highly successful start-up with 30 per cent revenue growth last year.

Mr Perot's Wall Street bankers hope to sell the Perot Systems shares on the basis that it will one day grow to the size of EDS, currently worth $25 billion.

The trend towards outsourcing is expected to continue as companies take advantage of new technology.

Firms can learn as they pay

Companies can turn the new corporate tax regime to their advantage, says Tony Elgood

Only once in a generation is the tax system fundamentally reformed — or so went the opening line of Gordon Brown's 1998 Budget speech.

Large UK companies will soon get a taste of this fundamental reform because their first corporation tax payment under the new quarterly tax payment regime will be due soon. A few have already paid.

The new regime requires "large companies" (broadly, those with taxable profits above £1.5 million — this limit being divided by the number of companies in the worldwide group) to make quarterly tax payments in the seventh, tenth, thirteenth and sixteenth months after the start of their accounting period.

Crucially, the first two payments will be based on forecasts of liability for the period; also, few companies will historically have completed tax computations before month 13.

The new payment regime creates a big cashflow hit. The Treasury has forecast that it will gain £7.5 billion. The Revenue has softened the blow of the new regime by introducing a transitional period, in which companies will initially pay 60 per cent of liability in instalments, rising to 100 per cent in year four. The balance of each transitional year's liability will be paid under "old rules". Nevertheless, companies will effectively pay five years' tax liabilities over a four-year period.

Interest will be charged (at base plus 2 per cent) if quarterly instalments prove to be less than should have been paid, and will be paid (at base minus 0.25 per cent) on overpayments, with more punitive rates from nine months after the year end. Given that tax payment will be based on forecasts, interest payments will become the norm. Companies must review tax payment strategies in the light of their sensitivity to such interest rates.

Historically, companies have fought shy of interest on overdue tax and tended to overpay. They need to assess whether this still makes sense.

The new payment rules come amid other tax changes. Corporate Tax Self Assessment (CTSA) has extra responsibilities and risks for companies, especially ones with cross-border interests. The Government's "Spend to Save" initiative is making itself felt, and there is concern from companies (which may not always be justified) that the Revenue is becoming more aggressive.

Tony Elgood says upfront tax may help firms to gain insight

So what should companies do? Most obviously, they need to think through the new payment regime and be geared up to decide how much to pay each quarter. What is the attitude to interest? How is penalty interest, at twice base plus 4 per cent, to be avoided?

At a higher level, the changes are leading companies to look at tax strategies, at approach to tax risk and at how the tax function supports business aims. Companies must also understand where tax risks lie. With CTSA, if a Revenue inquiry finds a return to have been wrong, substantial tax-geared penalties can apply. Investing in identifying tax risk is step one in the "self-policing" that protects against extra tax charges, penalties and costly Revenue inquiries. The taxman emphasises that "voluntary compliance" is in companies' interests.

The Revenue is using data extraction techniques with powerful software that can identify problem areas in seconds. Companies should consider using such methods to see where they may claim too much, or too little, tax relief.

These changes will probably involve more resource, process improvement, and more use of technology or advisers. Advances in technology also make tax outsourcing well worth looking at again.

This need not be "running just to stand still". The necessity of quarterly forecasts for tax payment purposes should encourage improvement of tax forecasting and reporting systems. Companies that use this to gain "real-time" understanding of drivers of their tax cost, and capacity to react to tax opportunities, can turn the "burden" of quarterly forecasting into significant benefit in managing their tax position.

Tony Elgood is a senior PricewaterhouseCoopers tax partner specialising in corporate tax management

As if VAT rules weren't complicated enough . . .

Neville Trout is going to be a busy man. He is the chap at Customs and Excise who is about to be inundated with comments after the publication last week of Customs' first foray into the use of a General Anti-Avoidance Rule. This took the form of what they, rather inelegantly, call "a mini-GAAR". As suggested when the Inland Revenue put out its consultation document last year, Customs is thinking of having separate GAARs for specific areas where it thinks avoidance should be cracked down upon. It rather takes away the point of the rule being "general", but never mind.

The first of these deals with schemes within the construction industry, which, in VAT terms, is one of the most complex of all the ludicrous entanglements that the administration of VAT has got itself into. For the purpose of deciding whether the proposed mini-GAAR is a good thing or a bad thing, it is best to ignore the technical arguments about construction and VAT.

Originally the reason for the idea of mini-GAARs to deal with VAT was blamed on Brussels. European law would make such a system the only way in which Customs could legally work, said boffins deep within Customs and Excise. VAT is, after all, a Europe-wide tax, and we are all supposed to be moving in harmony on any VAT issues.

However, that seems to have been abandoned. The thinking behind the document last week is simple. The point where tax avoidance becomes tax evasion is difficult to pin down. One man's tax evasion is another man's cheap bottle of beer bought in Calais, and all that.

At a stroke, Customs and Excise has decided on a method that makes spotting what is, and what is not, illegal very simple. In future, if this document comes to fruition, all that would matter would be if Customs and Excise said that something was illegal. If it said so, then it would be so and the fine would be as follows . . .

Overnight, any thoughts of concepts of freedom under the law and all those principles that make the life of a tax gatherer so difficult, would be abandoned.

Or, as the document puts it: "When this Schedule applies to a VAT avoidance transaction, the same consequences follow for VAT purposes as if the corresponding normal transaction had been carried out". But what is this puzzling concept of "the corresponding normal transaction" and who decides whether a transaction is avoidance? The document provides an answer immediately. "The 'corresponding normal transaction' means the transaction that would have been adopted if VAT avoidance was not a consideration," it says. And who decides which theoretical, or real, transaction is the normal one or the avoidance one? Customs and Excise. And how would they know?

Because one transaction would bring in less VAT revenue than the other. The definition of tax evasion is reduced simply to one of a monetary test. If there are two routes and you follow the one that raises less revenue for Customs and Excise, then you are a tax evader and the full weight of the courts will duly descend on you.

ROBERT BRUCE

Any route that saved you VAT would land you under the GAAR. The hysteria over tax revenues is truly producing some ridiculous contortions to make the principles of tax gathering fit the politicians' desperate need to find more and more tax revenue.

For example, a company could decide to reorganise its various office buildings to make its organisation more efficient. One side-effect of this could be that less, rather than more, VAT is due. The Customs and Excise argument would be that your decision was not a normal decision. Or as Peter Jenkins, Ernst & Young's VAT guru, would put it: "The benighted taxpayer feels that he has to go by the least efficient tax route in case he is strung up."

Back at Customs and Excise, they would not understand this at all. What they would believe is that they have at last cracked the problem.

They misunderstand. What they will have done, should a series of mini-GAARs become the norm, is to have made an already hugely over-complex tax into something that is infinitely more complicated, if that is possible. Any dispute is going to finish up at the VAT tribunal. Even more tax law will be spawned.

Comments on the document are required to be in by March 1. Mr Trout ought to indent now for a king-size keepnet in which to place them.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Call-up for local heroes

DAME Sheila Masters, who, in a few months, will become the English ICA's first woman president, will also be its millennial president. This sort of thing requires a bold initiative or two and you will not be surprised that several are on the way. Masters aims to convince the nation that everyone ought to be an accountant. Under the slogan "Everybody Counts", the project will encourage accountants everywhere to rise up to show how important chartered accountants are in the community. Institute members will be expected to advise and encourage all manner of community projects and to visit schools to convince the youth of today that accountancy has a useful role next century. It is a worthy initiative. But you can see why Masters may have a bit of an uphill task.

Winner's move

AFTER ten glorious years, the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants has dropped its Accountancy Journalist of the Year awards. This has obviously proved devastating to the winner of the trade paper section in last year's awards. Jon Bunn, who was the illustrious news editor at *Accountancy Age* in those days, has given up his green eye-shade and spike. He has jumped tracks and can now be found in the media relations department of PricewaterhouseCoopers. There he is looking after assurance and business advisory services. Or what you and I would call audit.

Fraud-busters

ANYONE coming within a few yards of Douglas Llambias can be pretty sure of some noisy advice. The veteran English ICA council member, recruitment consultant and fixer of accountancy mergers, is not one to shirk what he sees as his duty. Now he has written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer offering to fight fraud within the EU. Several years ago, he helped to set up an effective system, the Accountants' Fraud Panel, to provide police in Britain with accountancy expertise. Now he is offering to do the same in Europe. "We need good people who like being Sherlock Holmes," he said, adding that the work is "exciting as long as you don't get bumped off". Llambias's only problem is the Chancellor. "Since sending him the letter, I have been deafened by the silence," he reports.

ROBERT BRUCE

Modest falls at the close

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1998 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
646	395	Allied Domecq	470½	+ 2½	5.4	12.8
412½	289	Bulmer (HP)	289	− 1	8.5	12.9
42½	7	Burn Stewart	14½			
795	432	Diageo	630	− 24	3.7	78.1
900	670	Glenmorangie A	670	− 5	2.7	18.2
325	225	Highland Dist	254	...	4.9	11.6
249	115	Matthew Clark	242	...	6.7	8.2
59½	18½	Morgan W	28½			
2021½	725	SA Breweries	945½	+ 9½	3.9	13.9

BANKS

1998 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
1618½	893½	ABN-AMRO	1187½	+ 9½	3.4	14.2
1390	860	Abbey Nat	1255	− 88	3.2	18.5
1037	585	Alliance & Leic	787	− 12½	3.8	14.8
[illegible]	587½	Allied Irish	1185	− 18	1.8	33.3
[illegible]	293½	Aus Nat Z	392½	+ 1	5.0	...
[illegible]	3237½	Bank America	3903½	+ 18½	...	...
827	431	Bank Scotland	749	− 2½	1.7	18.8
1998	827	Barclays	1313	− 45	3.7	12.0
1487½	882½	Bk of Ireland	1404	...	2.0	23.0
2484½	1585½	Commerzbk	1792½	− 3½	3.1	...
543½	218½	Dai Ichi Kan Y	388½	− 9½	1.3	...
5369½	3218½	Deutsche Bk	3237½	+ 18½	2.5	...
1206½	1134½	Espirito Santo	1181½	+ 6½	3.2	...
531	112½	Fuji Bank Y	258½	− 4½	1.7	...
2073	980	HSBC	1622	+ 27	4.0	14.8
2002	937	HSBC HK	1518	+ 27	4.3	13.9
1000	648½	Halifax	754½	− ½	4.0	20.7
1055	587	Irish Perm	1025	− 5	1.6	28.7
1090	555	Lloyds TSB	798	− 1	2.9	22.9
1018½	657	Nat Aust Bk	984½	+ 4	3.9	...
1260	694	Nat West	1088	+ 2	3.8	18.7
673	451½	Northern Rock	497½	− 38½	2.7	15.9
1140	561	Ryl Bk Scot	1028	+ 27½	3.0	14.8
1050	355	Stand Chart	781	+ 14½	3.1	13.9
£164½	£164½	Wells Fargo	£164½	..	1.9	
447½	308	Woolwich	409½	+ 1½	2.0	
400	300	Woolwich	334	+ 2½	3.7	16.7

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

1998 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
332½	225	Alm Steel Grp	278½	...	5.2	9.0
1195	625	[illegible]	799	+ 20½	4.7	16.8

1998 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
122	96½	European Mtr	99½	+ 1	11.5	6.2
305	143	Evans Halshaw	257½	...	8.3	8.2
87½	38½	File Group	68	...	7.2	7.2
400½	85½	Finelist Grp	140	...	7.9	5.3
82½	51½	Glanchewton	51½	...	5.3	8.5
135½	89½	Gowrings	95	+ ½	4.8	8.4
20½	12½	HR Owen	13½	− ½	8.5	7.1
405	187	Headlam	298½	+ 1	3.1	14.5
180	100	Holders Tech	100½	...	8.4	5.6
120	30	ISA Intl	48½	...	8.8	6.5
250	85	Inchcape	135	...	8.9	16.5
80	56½	Jacks (Wm)	65		7.7	4.0
583½	351½	Kwik-Fit	422½	+ 1	2.0	17.0
614	329½	Lex Service	372	+ ½	8.2	8.7
123	62	Lookers	65½	− 2	10.3	...
575	351	Menzies (John)	370	+ 1	4.9	9.7
5½	1	Middlesex	1½	− ½		
29½	14½	Midsuites	25½	..	2.4	6.7
320½	172	Nottsoil	235	...	5.2	10.1
281	140½	Northamber	150	− 9½	3.5	8.7
342	117	Partco	150½	...	7.6	8.3
312½	125½	Pendragon	182½	+ 2	7.6	8.2
255	120½	Perry Gp	130	...	9.1	6.0
443	138	Premier Farnell	162½	...	8.8	7.0
164½	62½	Quicks Group	86½	+ 2	10.4	6.2
152	40	REA	45	...	8.9	11.0
3	1½	Resco	2			
36½	21½	Ring	30½	..	6.8	12.7
3½	0½	Rossmo	1½			
5½	2½	Ross Gp	3½	...	...	9.1
112½	57½	Rutland	80	+ 3½	7.0	5.8
31½	10½	SEP Intl	13½	...	12.0	8.4
165½	113	Salehurst	125	...	5.2	9.4
30	7	Sattre	10½			
290	126½	Sanderson Bram	147½	− 1	4.8	5.0
67½	25	Sedgemoor	34	+ 1	7.7	9.4
273½	123½	Sylvar	169	...	7.9	6.6
195½	63½	Time Products	75	...	17.7	5.6
235	132½	Trust Motor Grp	227½	...	1.4	4.0
440	287½	UNECO	296	...	3.1	12.5
124	14	United Ocean Bo	14½	+ ½	10.3	3.2
299½	184½	Vardy (Reg)	222½	+ 2½	4.8	7.8
840	665	WF Elect	669	− 1	3.1	15.9
192½	62½	Wyko	80	...	5.3	8.4
165½	86½	Young (H)	92½	...	6.8	5.8

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS

1998 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
330	157	Autologous	159½	+ 1	4.4	18.5
642	309	Booker Hill	448½	− 4½	4.3	...
49½	9	Brierley Inv	14½	...	8.9	4.7
680	329½	Brit Aerosp Tab	619½	+ ½	4.5	12.9

BUILDING MATERIALS

ELECTRICITY

ELECTRONIC & ELECT

CHEMICALS

ENGINEERING

CONSTRUCTION

DISTRIBUTORS

ENGINEERING, VEHICLES

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

HEALTHCARE

HOUSEHOLD GDS & TEXT

INSURANCE

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

LEISURE & HOTELS

MEDIA

MINING

OIL & GAS

OTHER FINANCIAL

PHARMACEUTICALS

PRINTING & PAPER

PROPERTY

RETAILERS, FOOD

RETAILERS, GENERAL

SUPPORT SERVICES

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

TRANSPORT

WATER

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

SHORTS (under 5 years)

LONGS (over 15 years)

MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years)

UNDATED

INDEX-LINKED

	Sell	Buy	+/–	Yld %
AIB GOVETT UNIT TRUST LTD				
0171 378 7979 Dealing: 0171 407 7886				
Protected Funds				
UK Safeguard	143.56	152.89	+ 0.39	
-do- NAV to Jan 19	140.39	140.39	...	...
UK Equity Safeguard	114.30	122.24	+ 0.61	2.02
-do- NAV to Mar 19	110.98	110.98	...	...
US Eq Safeguard	95.63	101.70	+ 1.14	
Cash	960.37	965.18	...	6.25
UK Growth Funds				
UK Equity Gen	425.14	450.65	– 0.31	1.80
UK Small Cos	83.85	88.67	+ 0.29	0.50
FTSE 250 Index	98.35	105.09	+ 0.40	1.89
Geared UK Index	#23.538	#24.846	+ 0.02	5.75
Income Funds				
Corp Bd	88.69	91.70	+ 0.06	6.65
Monthly Inc	43.81	46.85	+ 0.26	7.98
International Funds				
American Gen	365.57	387.30	– 1.13	0.17
American Stra	181.49	193.58	+ 3.80	
UC US Index	#29.157	#30.719	+ 0.64	4.50
European Gen	444.98	470.70	+ 3.36	.
European Stra	221.04	236.21	+ 8.79	.
Asian Gen	107.98	114.30	– 0.08	.
Asia Pacific	62.16	66.33	+ 1.17	1.09
Pacific Stra	86.45	92.45	+ 2.01	.
Greater China	148.06	156.22	+ 5.62	..
Latin America	51.15	54.70	+ 8.74	.
Int Growth	196.60	210.26	+ 2.45	0.11
Balanced Events	181.51	188.09	.	2.18
Global Strategy	47.09	50.37	+ 0.87	.

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Bargains of the week: from a trip to the historic sites of Lebanon to a Valentine's break in Dublin or birdwatching in Nepal

■ *A selection of last-minute holidays and travel opportunities at home, on the Continent and farther afield, many at bargain prices*

THE cast of *Oklahoma!* led by Maureen Lipman has just taken up residence at the Lyceum Theatre after a sell-out run at the National and good seats and a night at a leading West End hotel are now available from Theatrebreak from £108. Details: 01904 679999.

■ COTTAGES sleeping four on a farm in North Devon are available for £167 for a week from February 13 with Farm and Cottage Holidays. Details: 01237 479698.

■ DUBLIN, always lively, sometimes romantic, is available over Valentine's weekend with Thomas Cook Holidays. Fly from Heathrow on February 12 and enjoy two nights' B&B at the Arlington Hotel for £201. Details: 01733 418188.

■ A BICYCLE made for two comes as a free optional extra on a Valentine's weekend at Hallery House Hotel, Cheltenham. For those on four wheels, *The Romantic Road* is offered. Dinner, B&B for two nights from February 12 costs £220 a couple. Details: 01242 578450.

■ JERSEY for Valentine's weekend for £139 with flights from Gatwick or Southampton are on offer from Jersey Travel Service. Fly on February 13 or 14 and enjoy two nights with dinner, B&B. Details: 0181-891 6020.

■ TAKE the catamaran from Weymouth as an alternative on February 13 and a week's B&B at the Mayfair, Jersey, with an indoor pool and gym, costs £130 with discounts for children from Modern Hotels. Details: 01534 59529.

■ SINGING for pleasure programmes every morning and evening are harmonised with afternoon walks on a midweek break at Grasmere in the Lake District with Countrywide Holidays. The price for four nights' full board in a guest house from February 15 is £164. Details: 0161-446 2226.

EVEN in February, Paris must still be the favourite city of many who choose to enjoy a romantic Valentine's weekend — and it can be inexpensive, *Tony Dawe writes.* Two nights B&B with return flights from Gatwick cost from £135 with Crystal Premier Cities while three nights at the elegant Hotel Ambassador cost from £245 with flights. Champagne is included for stays between February 8 and 15. Details: 0181-241 5040.

A two-night break by Eurostar from February 12 to 14 starts at £179 with Eurotours; Time Off has a three-night stay with rail travel for £98 (but not over Valentine's weekend). Details: Eurotours 0181-289 8889; Time Off 0990 846363.

■ THE most romantic offer of the week, however, must be tickets for the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, at Prague's National Theatre, together with three nights B&B at a three-star hotel in the city. Packages with return flights cost from £366 with Travel for the Arts. Details: 0171-483 4466.

■ CROSS-COUNTRY skiing is a more energetic suggestion for Valentine's Day and you can do this with Headwater on a week's holiday from February 13 in the western Auvergne, France. Full board in a family-run hotel with pool plus ski hire and pass cost from £348 if you drive down, or from £539 if you fly then take the train. Details: 01606 813367.

■ INSTANT winter sun should be available if you fly on Tuesday from Gatwick to Majorca, where a week's self-catering in Palma costs only £99 with First Choice. Details: 0870-750 0100.

■ MUSIC, from folk to classical, is the focus of the Venice Carnival which runs from February 5 to 15, though masked balls and street theatre also play a part. Lunn Poly has a variety of offers to the city with, for example, three nights B&B at a canal-side hotel and flight from Gatwick on February 7 costing £432. Details from the company's Holiday Shops.

■ HALF-TERM week in February (whichever one it is for your children) is available at a choice of villas in the Algarve with The Villa Agency. Prices start from £175 for a week in a property sleeping four in Albufeira; flights and car hire can also be arranged. Details: 01273 747811.

HEADLINE PHOTO AGENCY

Valentine's weekend in the city of romance need not be costly

TEN nights in Nepal with return flights from London for less than £1,000 are on offer from Naturetrek, which is leading birdwatching tours starting on February 5 and 26. Explore the upper slopes of the Kathmandu Valley, Chitwan National Park and a wetlands wildlife reserve for £990. Details: 01962 733051.

■ JAMAICA for a week for £449 with a flight from Gatwick on Sunday or Barbados for £489 with a flight from the same airport on Monday are among late offers from Co-op Travelcare. Both are Airtours trips with room-only deals. Details: 0541 500388.

■ FEBRUARY is a popular month for visiting Orlando and Disneyworld, especially over half term, and Jetsave has some bargain fly-drive deals. Return flights and a fortnight's car hire are on offer from £199, with Virgin flights available for an extra £100. Accommodation, from family hotels to luxury homes, can be arranged. Details: 01342 312033.

■ PINK coral sand and delightful scenery should make Bermuda a suitably romantic Valentine's destination and Prestige Holidays is offering a three-night self-catering break on the island from £399 with flights from Gatwick. Details: 01425 480400.

■ THE ravages of civil war still evident in Beirut will be overshadowed by the glories of a previous age on an introductory trip to Lebanon with Bales Worldwide. The temples of Baalbek, city of Byblos and the historic sites of Tyre and Sidon are included in the week's holiday, costing £499 with B&B and a flight from Heathrow on February 21. Details: 01306 876881.

■ SYDNEY for a fortnight for £651 with return flights from Gatwick is a near unbeatable bargain from Austravel's Great Escape. The offer is limited, however, to a departure on March 2 and the price includes accommodation vouchers. Details: 0171-584 0202.

See *The Times* on Saturday for more flight bargains and last-minute holidays

COMEDY
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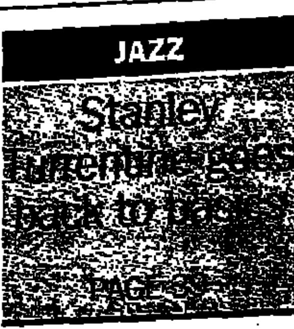
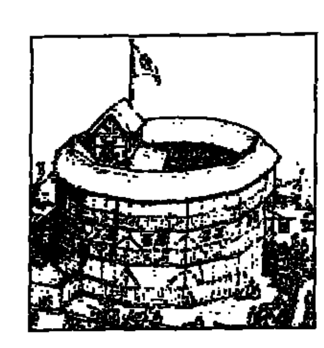
JAZZ



The Bard trod these boards



Hollywood has benefited from the excavation of the Rose Theatre, as Simon Tait reports

It was on the last day of January ten years ago that archaeologist Julian Bowsher's trowel struck gold on the south bank of the Thames, next to Southwark Bridge. Actually it was "chalky white stuff", but it was the first sight of what turned out to be an outer wall of the Rose Theatre, the first and probably last of the Bankside Elizabethan playhouses to be unearthed. Built by Philip Henslowe and Edward Alleyn in 1587, it was an actors' theatre where Shakespeare began to learn his trade first as an actor and then as a dramatist, and where most of Marlowe's works had their first nights.

A reconstruction of the Rose, made at Shepperton Studios, stars in the film *Shakespeare in Love*, which opens tomorrow (see review opposite). And Judi Dench, a trustee of the Rose Theatre Trust who also plays Queen Elizabeth in the film, is now the proud owner of the life-sized re-creation of the Rose's interior, having bought it from the film company. She plans to use it as a teaching aid for young actors.

Bowsher's find led to six months of discoveries and to desperate pleas for delays to the new building that was due to go up on the site, so that more could be uncovered. A determined band of luvvies staked a claim to the ruins, and when time had finally run out for the dig, they stood shoulder to shoulder with Peggy Ashcroft around the soggy pit. They won the battle, and now the site is to be opened again to the public, with some of the cream of British theatre lending their support.

English Heritage has scanned the remains and declared them to be in good condition, and work has begun to prepare the site for an exhibition opening at Easter which will help to raise the £8 million needed to finish excavating the theatre. A bid for lottery funding is to be made later this year and re-excavation should start in two years' time.

Protected since 1992 as a listed ancient monument, the Rose is now under the control of the Rose Theatre Trust whose chairman, Harvey Sheldon, was the chief archaeologist on the site ten years ago. "We were forced to leave the Rose before we had finished the job, and it has always been our intention to complete the excavation if we could raise the funds," he says. "We are determined that once the door is open to the Rose it will never close again."

The gloriously passionate campaign ten years ago by actors and archaeologists included making a human fence around the blackened, half-buried timbers, and an all-night vigil during which Laurence Olivier made his final public performance (he died a month later) with the rallying "O for a muse of fire" speech from *Henry V*. A major rethink was subsequently ordered and the planned new building was redesigned with an extra basement to contain the remains within a cement shell. The developers were told to put aside another £230,000 for a future display and the possible return of the archaeologists.

Now the Rose lies beneath a subterranean pool, like some urban Atlantis, with the water keeping its ancient timbers alive. The exhibition is being designed by Bill Dudley of the National Theatre, who is creating a kind of animated hologram, conjured with the advice of special effects designers Imagination and with images of the theatre from *Shakespeare in Love*. The Rose will rise out of the black water while Sir Ian McKellen provides the commentary.

"The basement was built with slatted windows which make the site reminiscent of a cathedral or a castle, and you can clearly sense the passing of time," says Dudley. "It's got this magical pond water and you could think that a hand with a quill could come out of it, like Excalibur. I didn't think we could have quite such a dramatic space."

If production costs can be raised, Sir Peter Hall will produce a video for the exhibition including excerpts from four of the plays which were first performed here — Marlowe's *Dr Faustus* and *Tamburlaine the Great*, Shakespeare's *Henry VI Part I* and Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*. Actors Antony Sher and Albert Finney are expected to take part.

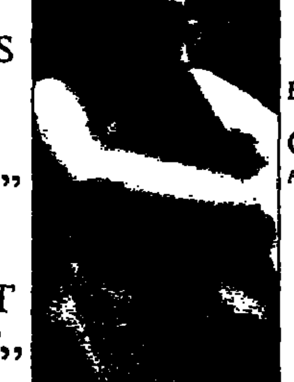
The finds at the Rose have influenced the re-creation of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, almost next door, from fundamentals such as the orientation of the stage to the proportions of the groundlings' yard. Even now there is a friendly dispute about the position of the pillars supporting the stage roof, the Rose information having confused matters because two stages from different dates were found.

"The discovery of the Rose meant a complete re-evaluation for the profession," says Hall. "I was brought up to believe that the Elizabethans worked on a simple thrust stage, but with the Rose we found that it was a traverse stage, a stage of one door opening on to another, of visible mystery, a stage on which an actor could command everybody from a single platform. Now we either have our theatres so big that we have to yell or so small that you can't yell.

"But actors built this theatre. The Rose was the beginning of the most important theatre culture in history."

PETER TREVNOR

Digging continued last month at the Rose Theatre site, contained in the basement of a new building. The site has now been immersed in water again to preserve the ancient timbers



Surprised on my sick bed

RADIO

I expect you have rushed to this space to find out what I thought about coverage of the wedding of Carla Germaine and Greg Cordell. They married on Monday, the day they met, having won a competition arranged by BRMB, the Birmingham commercial radio station, whose frequency is now engraved on the happy couple's wedding rings. It doesn't get more romantic than that.

Obviously I had planned to drive to the Midlands so that I could hear the whole thing on BRMB. But by a terrible stroke of good fortune I was struck down with influenza and have had to spend the past five days in a darkened room, living on grapes and water.

And radio. The thing about radio heard randomly and at great length is that it enables one to test the present widespread belief that the medium lacks surprises. Admittedly I came across nothing as surprising as the level of my own body temperature, but radio still has its quirks and oddities. Trouble is, most of these now take the form of stories about real life.

Shortly before the radio wedding, magnanimously reported by Radio 4's *Today* programme, I was startled out of slumber by a news item on, I think, Radio 5 Live. It went like this: "Gay Manchester Professionals have had to change their name because the Greater Manchester Police have objected, having already registered the initials GMP. Gay Manchester Professionals will now be known as Manchester Gay Professionals."

Well, it surprised me. But the thing that surprises me in the broader sense is that people who complain about radio lacking surprises (they usually mean Radio 4) seem to have a determinedly narrow idea of what constitutes a surprise. For me, a programme that defies all attempts to prejudge it is the best surprise radio can deliver.

There were two examples on Monday and both were on Radio 4. **Dead Men Tell No Tales** was a beautifully crafted play by Kelvin Segger which melded three Emile Zola short stories into one, using the linking device of a man telling the stories to an acquaintance. The formula may be routine, but the execution was superb.

The pick of the three, at least insofar as it reflected the best of Zola's macabre side, had Michael Maloney as a man who wakes up one day to find that everyone around thinks he is dead. He can neither move nor speak, except to us, the listeners. He is still speaking to us when the coffin lid is nailed down.

And then there was F.W. de Klerk, who appeared on **Start The Week** to promote his book. This had the makings of a mauling, given the presence of Jeremy Paxman, John Pilger and Thomas Kenneally. But it was no contest. De Klerk was ponderous, insistent, repetitive, maddeningly stubborn.

He had made mistakes, but only in the sense that we all make mistakes ... that sort of thing. He left the ring without a mark on him. That was the surprise.

PETER BARNARD

City friends in need

NEW ON VIDEO

■ **THE OBJECT OF MY AFFECTION**
Fox Pathé, 15, 1998
JENNIFER ANISTON'S search for the perfect vehicle to consolidate her leap from TV to Hollywood continues with this mildly pleasing but over-contrived romantic comedy about the mismatched love relationship between a gay man (Paul Rudd) and a woman expecting a baby. Script and direction help the players to skate over any real pain they might be feeling; Nigel Hawthorne adds some class as an acerbic theatre critic; and New York City looks unfailingly lovely. Rent it if you urgently need to escape from reality.

■ **THE GINGERBREAD MAN**
PolyGram, 15, 1998
WHAT is a veteran maverick like Robert Altman doing directing a John Grisham story? Earning a living, of course. Kenneth Branagh (surprising casting) plays a successful lawyer in Savannah, led into murky waters by Embeth Davidtz's waitress after a one-night stand. She tells of being stalked by her father, a religious nut (Robert Duvall); Branagh gets him arrested. The plot's improbable progression does not suit Altman's free-flowing style, but he compensates with some wonderful atmospheric effects. A rental release.

■ **GO NOW**
BBC, 15, 1995
IN THIS BBC film hot director Michael Winterbottom buckles down with energy and compassion to the simple human predicament of a man fighting multiple sclerosis. In these speedy 80 minutes there is no room for maudlin sentiment, the usual tone of films about diseases. Robert Carlyle is immensely appealing as the ordinary Joe hero, a plasterer and an amateur soccer player, put to the test when MS strikes. Juliet Aubrey is his girlfriend; the script is written by Jimmy McGovern and MS sufferer Paul Powell.

Paul Rudd is the object of Jennifer Aniston's affection

■ ***LOVE AND DEATH ON LONG ISLAND***
Fox Pathé, 15, 1998
AN ENGLISH writer untainted by the 20th century (John Hurt) chances upon an American teen movie, and falls hopelessly in love with one of its players (Jason Priestley). The first half of this adaptation of Gilbert Adair's novel is a droll delight, with Hurt quite wonderful as the bemused back number suddenly enchanted by popular culture. A pity that once Long Island is reached, and the writer confronts his idol, the film's lack of substance shows, and its charms wear thin. A rental release.

■ **MASTER OF THE HOUSE**
BFI Films, U, 1925
DENMARK'S director Carl Theodor Dreyer is not usually associated with comedy, but this wonderful silent film ripples with observant digs at domestic relations between man and woman. "What fools we men are!" says Victor Frandsen's tyrant husband near the end. But that is only after the tables have been turned and a lesson learnt by the man who drove wife, children and nanny to distraction. Dreyer's care over settings is evident; so is his command of actors, and his special ability to strip situations to the tender core. The print is decent, and the accompanying soundtrack of classical snippets unobtrusive.

GEOFF BROWN

Viagra for the mind — and Will

NEW MOVIES: James Christopher sees Paltrow shine and Fiennes smoulder in *Shakespeare in Love*

Shakespeare in Love
Empire
15, 123 mins
Thrilling romantic comedy about the broke and blocked Bard

Stepmom
UCI Whiteleys
12, 124 mins
Squelchy divorce movie with Julia Roberts and Susan Sarandon

Very Bad Things
Warner Village
West End, 18, 100 mins
Macabre comedy thriller that shocks a stag party

Two Girls and a Guy
Virgin Haymarket
15, 84 mins
Studenty chamber piece tests sexual fidelity and truth

A Man and a Woman
ABC Swiss Centre
PG, 103 mins
Weak, whimsical French love story from the 1960s

One of the great grudges luvvies have against the film industry is that it steals the lifeblood of theatre and gives back next to nothing. Then along trots a film like John Madden's **Shakespeare in Love** with the most thrilling, sentimental and hilarious plug for the stage that I have ever seen, and suddenly luvvies the world over are delighted. This, presumably, is because half of them seem to be cast in it.

There is plenty to be thrilled about. If you don't look deeper than the words "romantic comedy" you'll find a ripping yarn about a struggling, upstart scribe called William Shakespeare with serious quill problems: sexual as well as inky. Not only is he suffering chronic writer's block, but he hasn't had sex since he ditched his wife in Stratford months before. "It's like trying to pick a lock with a wet herring," says Joseph Fiennes's depressed Will, limply throwing himself on the couch of Antony Sher's quack psychiatrist.

A muse is what Will needs. Someone to get the juices flowing so he can start his epic, *Romeo and Ethel, the Pirate's Daughter*, for Geoffrey Rush's seedy theatre owner, Henslowe. Inspiration is at hand. During the audition from hell with the usual stutterers, dwarfs and drunks, Will bumps into Gwyneth Paltrow's rich, stage-struck Viola, disguised as Tom Kent, who duly lands the role of Romeo. Their secret affair blooms through moustaches and tights, and Will suddenly finds his first major masterpiece flowing from his quill.

The magic of this beefy romance is that the play not only maps their lovelife, but races ahead to plot their destiny. But the sly genius of the film is the way the writers Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard bring a thoroughly modern sensibility to the daily pitfalls of theatre folk in the Renaissance. It's the *Blackadder/Monty Python* factor. The mean streets of Southwark are close, mucky and claustrophobic. People are routinely splattered with pots of urine. Feuding playhouses fight for the same impoverished, plague-ridden audiences. Writers are two a penny. And the Thames is crawling with ferrymen who say "I had that Christopher Marlowe in my boat once."

Colin Firth is the only real villain. Wonderfully grumpy, he is naked self-interest buttoned into the dastardly Lord Wessex, who has earmarked Paltrow's hand and fortune with the blessing of the Queen. "Too late" mutters Judi Dench's terrifying monarch when half-a-dozen fur cloaks hit the puddle she has just waded through on her way to her coach.

The irreverent joy of *Shakespeare in Love* is that it's knocked into shape by a series of accidents. This is vintage Stoppard. Normally, as in *Arcadia*, he places some jaded scholar at this end of the millennium to field these accidents and wrap them in some sort of academic fallacy. Here the fielders are us and, no, we don't want to do any intellectual stretches because we like our greatest cultural icon to look like the foolish, infatuated human being we hope he was.

There are romantic niggles. Is Paltrow more infatuated with the poetry than the man? "I love you beyond poetry" is the most insincere line in the script. Yet, dressed as the vulnerable Romeo, or undressed as the sensuous Viola, Paltrow delivers the most convincing and mesmerising performance of the film. Fiennes's Will is magnificently moody. The studied tilt of the head, the hairy glimpse of cleavage, the smouldering stare are things few would dare to attempt even in the privacy of their own bathroom. But he doesn't sink many boreholes of illumination into the Bard.

For all the chest-beating about theatre, this is ultimately a victory for film. Director John Madden may have innocently set out to martyr a few sacred theatrical cows. What he actually ends up with is a sophisticated 16th-century spin on Robert Altman's Hollywood satire, *The Player*. If more films were as revealing about the haphazard magic of theatre I'm not sure there would be much theatre left to watch. The luvvies may have a point after all.

Gwyneth Paltrow and Joseph Fiennes in *Shakespeare in Love*: "If more films were as revealing about the haphazard magic of theatre I'm not sure there would be much theatre left to watch"

Despite the lip-trembling efforts of Julia Roberts and Susan Sarandon, **Stepmom** has little to recommend it apart from a high Kleenex factor. Trendy fashion photographer Isabel (Roberts) has moved in with Ed Harris, a lawyer, and his two spoilt, prickly children, cute Ben and spiteful Anna. Former wife and perfect earth-mother Jackie (Sarandon) can barely bring herself to acknowledge her luscious young successor. The kids bristle with resentment at having to shuttle between the two women. Liam Aiken's Ben is mostly just cheeky; Jena Malone's 12-year-old Anna was minted in hell. Insanely eager to please, Roberts persists like a hopeless Mary Poppins. Meanwhile, Harris looks on feebly, as if he has permanent indigestion.

Things turn unbelievably squelchy when Sarandon announces she has terminal cancer. "It should have been me," groans Harris as if antacid tablets wouldn't melt in his mouth. Can Roberts win the kids around before their mother dies? Can Sarandon bury her hatchets in something more appropriate than Roberts's forehead? Director Chris Columbus squeezes every mushy drop of sentiment he can from his close-ups of the dewy-eyed kids. He could get locked up for this kind of manipulative abuse.

Marriage gets an equally rough ride in Peter Berg's black comedy, **Very Bad Things**. "It's an 18-wheel cement truck that's going to break every bone in your body," quips Keith's stockbroker buddy, Mike. From the way Keith's future wife (Cameron Diaz) gets steamed up over wedding arrangements, you know this is not fanciful thinking. But comedy is a deeply misleading word to describe what happens next.

Four of Keith's best male friends — all equally stressed out — escape to Las Vegas to celebrate his last days of freedom. An orgy of drink, drugs and the inevitable stripper has *Blood Simple* consequences when the nude dancer is accidentally impaled on a hook in the hotel bathroom. When the hotel security man pitches up, things go from very bad to downright ghastly. By the time the lads have chopped up the evidence, bagged it in suitcases and buried it in the desert, they've turned from regular obnoxious jocks into five eyeball-rolling, over-acting neurotics led by Christian Slater's demonic estate agent.

From these dismal ingredients, director Berg fashions a surprisingly compelling, macabre satire on buddy movies and smug suburban aspirations. I don't know about taste, but it's a wonderful antidote to *Stepmom*.

The rest of this week's releases are equally damaged. Curiously, James Toback's chamber piece, **Two Girls and a Guy**, is a film that might work better at a fringe theatre venue like the Donmar. A studenty tilt at sexual fidelity and modern relationships, the film is full of foul language, tequila and angry posturing. For good reason. Two girls, standing on the doorstep of Robert Downey Jr's SoHo flat, discover that they are both supposedly longstanding girlfriends of the same flaky actor. Natasha Wagner's tomboyish sprite, Lou, can't stop talking. Heather Graham's stunning blonde, Carla, can't stop looking disgusted. "You mean you came here to surprise him too?" winces Carla.

We're primed for a selfish, lying creep and we duly get one. The problem is that once the girls put him on the spot they don't really know what to do with him.

There are angry, gobsmacked headshots and a steady drizzle of accusations. Looking like an unshaved bloodhound, Downey takes the humiliation on the chin. "I'm an actor," he bawls in his defence, launching into Hamlet's Mad Speech to his mother. Preposterously, it works.

At this point, a quirky film savaging male narcissism suddenly falls on its sword. For all the talk of monogamy, the unspoken issue now is will he make it with both girls? The question Toback's film should be asking is why are these two sexy, intelligent girls competing for this mother-fixated gizzard?

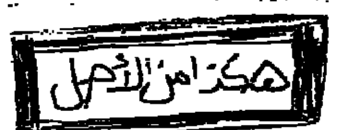
No less corny is Claude Lelouch's 1966 film **A Man and A Woman**. Why it won two Oscars for best foreign film and best original screenplay is beyond my wildest ken. Here single parents Anouk Aimée and Jean-Louis Trintignant discover each other when they take their kids out of boarding school for the weekend. Like *Shakespeare in Love*, this is a love affair based on accidents. He is a chain-smoking racing driver whose wife committed suicide after he crashed during the Le Mans 24-hour race. She still hankers after her dead husband, a Brazilian stuntman.

Lelouch dresses their romance in every cinematic effect he can dream up. This includes hosing car windscreens to denote bad weather and flashing from black and white to lurid orange for no perceptible reason. He plays the same tricks with sound: terrible supermarket music, or cheesy dubbed songs. None of it enhances the plonking romance.

Still, back to the story. After a big race, Aimée sends a telegram telling Trintignant that she loves him. He drives what seems like 22,000 miles in order to be with her. She realises she hasn't buried her husband in her own mind. Will they ever get it together? Who cares?

LINKS

WEBSITES:
Shakespeare in Love: www.uip.com
Stepmom: www.sony.com
Two Girls and a Guy: www.fox.co.uk
Very Bad Things: www.verybadthings.com
TELEVISION:
Barry Norman's Film Night, Sky Premier Monday 9pm
Movie Chartshow, Channel 5, Wednesday 4.40am
RADIO:
Talking Pictures, Radio 4, Saturday 5.30pm



■ LISTINGS

Ayckbourn goes Russian

ARTS

■ THEATRE

Controversial feminism

RECOMMENDED TODAY

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Marit Hargie

LONDON

THE FOREST: Alan Ayckbourn adapts Ostrovsky's sardonic 1870 comedy, with Michael Feast's impoverished actor trying to impress his rich aunt (Frances de la Tour). Anthony Page directs.
Lyttelton (0171-452 3000). Opens tonight, 7pm. In repertoire.

RUSSIAN FESTIVAL: Galina Ustvolskaya, a former pupil of Shostakovich and one of Russia's most important contemporary composers, is lauded in a day of words and music. The celebrations culminate in a performance by the Marsyas Ensemble (Duke's Hall, 7.30pm) of the UK premiere of the composer's Second Symphony, True and Eternal Bliss.
Royal Academy of Music (0171-935 5461).

BORODIN STRING QUARTET: More Russian music is on the menu here as the Borodins make a welcome return playing works by Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich.
Wigmore Hall (0171-935 2141). Tonight, 7.30pm.

THE DEVIL'S DANCE: The opening concert in the seventh Early Music Series here features the acclaimed lutenist Paul O'Dette in an evening of fantasies, dances and variations from Renaissance and Baroque Spain.
Purcell Room (0171-960 4242). tonight, 7.30pm.

Steven Osborne joins the Hallé in Huddersfield

ELSEWHERE

ABERDEEN: Britain's flagship contemporary dance company Rambert visits here until Saturday. Topping the bill is the Scottish premiere of Christopher Bruce's Four Scenes, framed by Paul Taylor's vivacious Airs and Ohad Naharin's Axioma 7
His Majesty's Theatre (01224 641122). Opens tonight, 7.30pm.

BIRMINGHAM: The virtuoso pianist Lars Vogt joins the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra as soloist in Mozart's C minor Piano Concerto. Sakari Oramo conducts Vaughan Williams's enigmatic Sixth Symphony and Bartók's Divertimento for Strings.
Symphony Hall (0121-212 3333). Tonight, 7.30pm.

HUDDERSFIELD: The Hallé Orchestra under Ole Schmidt plays Rossini's stirring overture to The Thieving Magpie. With Steven Osborne as soloist in Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No 2.
Town Hall (0484 422133). Tonight, 7.30pm.

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London

■ House full, returns only ◪ Some seats available □ Seats at all prices

◪ **LITTLE MALCOLM AND HIS STRUGGLE AGAINST THE EUNUCHS:** Ewan McGregor in the title role of a sentimentalised revival of David Halliwell's play about art-student failure and fascism.
Comedy (0171-369 1731).

◪ **OKLAHOMA!:** National Theatre cast includes Maureen Lipman in transfer of Trevor Nunn's Rodgers and Hammerstein.
Lyceum (0171-416 6099).

◪ **RICHARD III:** Robert Lindsay puts on the hump for Elijah Moshinsky's RSC production: transfer from Stratford.
Savoy (0171-836 8888).

□ **THE MEMORY OF WATER:** Alison Steadman, Samantha Bond and Julia Sawalha star in Shelagh Stephenson's acclaimed drama of family memories. Terry Johnson directs.
Vaudeville (0171-836 9987).

◪ **THE STREET OF CROCODILES:** Return for Theatre de Complicite's inventive staging of Bruno Schulz's recollections of pre-Nazi Poland.
Queens (0171-494 5041).

□ **VASSA:** Sheila Hancock heads a terrific cast in Gorky's strong drama. Howard Davies directs a new version for the Almeida season.
Albery (0171-369 1730).

□ **BRIEF CANDLE:** Denis Quilley plays various European celebrities who fell for the young Marie Bashkirtseff (Celia White) in the 1880s and figured in her posthumously published diaries. Stella Quilley directs.
New End (0171-794 0022).

□ **CERTAIN YOUNG MEN:** Peter Gill directs Jeremy Northam, Sean Chapman and six other young actors in his exploration of the way today's men live together.
Almeida Theatre (0171-359 4404).

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

James Christopher's choice of the latest movies

NEW RELEASES

HILARY AND JACKIE (15): Anand Tucker's controversial biopic about Jacqueline du Pré ostensibly celebrates the cellist's genius. But scratch it and you discover a selfish schemer who preyed on her family like a vampire. With Emily Watson and Rachel Griffiths.

PRACTICAL MAGIC (12): Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman star as witches in a flashy gothic soap about sisters with fatal attraction. It is tempered by several seat-clutching special effects but the parable about girl power and the right to be abnormal is too sweet to digest.

BULWORTH (18): Warren Beatty's disillusioned senator discovers a taste for telling ugly home truths. A shameless ego trip for Beatty, but a wonderful new comic spin on political manipulation and mendacity. Beatty produces, stars and directs.

CLASS TRIP (15): Quirky French thriller about a school trip that is haunted by the waking nightmares of a young boy. Claude Miller directs this award-winning piece of suspense.

54 (15): Puny fairytale about a young beefcake (Ryan Phillippe) who finds celebrity and sex in Manhattan's most famous 1970s disco. Mike Myers salvages some debauched comedy as club owner, Steve Rubell.

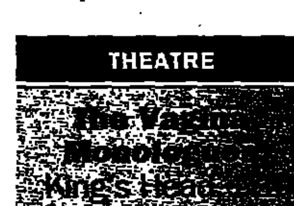
THE POLYGRAPH (ICA): The results of a lie detector test turn the life of a murder suspect and struggling student, Patrick Goyette, into a hell of nightmare possibilities. Stylish but impenetrable mystery from Canadian guru Robert Lepage.

CURRENT

THE OPPOSITE OF SEX (18) Christina Ricci plays a caustic, trashy 16-year-old who stitches up her gay step-brother by stealing his boyfriend and high-tailing it to LA. A blistering comedy on political correctness. Written and directed by Don Roos.

LITTLE VOICE (15): Mark Herman's wonderful version of Jim Cartwright's stage hit. Jane Horrocks sings glorious covers of torch song divas. Michael Caine, Ewan McGregor, Brenda Blethyn and Jim Broadbent sleaze around in the foreground

Tales from the body of women



THEATRE

When reviewing a show of this nature one must choose one's euphemisms with care. Against a blood-red square outlined against a larger blood-red square, Eve Ensler sits on a small but generously padded chair (yes, same colour) and reports on vaginas.

Described in the programme — also blood-red — as "writer and activist", she explains that she has interviewed hundreds of women, aged from 72 to 6, asking them how they feel about what they have. Sample: If your vagina wore something what would it be? Answers include a large hat full of flowers, high heels, lace and combat boots. The show that grew from these played Off-Broadway, stirred up much controversy and won a couple of awards.

Ensler is a neat woman, strongly built, and her face is framed within a Louise Brooks bob. From time to time she plays with the corners of her hair but mostly her hands are concerned to shift the cue cards from her lap to the table beside her as she introduces and recites, sort of, the monologues she has constructed from selected interviews.

My carefully chosen companion admitted that these reports got many facts and feelings right, but she passed on the question concerning the interviewees' rhapsodies when the answers went metaphoric. The entire natural world is explored to provide the images that might convey the nature of the thing.

Feminist theory argued that the vagina had to be reclaimed from patriarchal domination, and Ensler seems to have found many women who paid as little attention to it as possible until that wonderful moment when someone, generally another woman, introduced them to what they had disowned. I can go along with that, but this show unwittingly indicates the risk that everything else is then going to be devalued.

Men do get a look in, literally in the case of Bob, one of only two men to be awarded Ensler's praise, who sits entranced and gazes, for an hour. Most of her show I didn't like much, and some of it I didn't like at all. There is something weird about being in an audience while a woman alone on a stage twists her mouth into unusual shapes, demonstrating a couple of dozen different orgasmic moans.

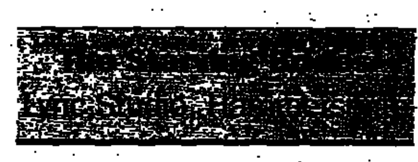
The passionate dignity in the account by a Bosnian woman from a rape camp was marred, I felt, by the similarity of its imagery to that used by women in Kansas or seemingly anywhere. Ensler explains that she has rewritten some of the stories, but that certainly reduces their value.

And then there is that six-year-old. "What does your vagina smell like?" Reported answer: "Snowflakes." I imagined a man asking a six-year-old boy what he felt his penis smelt like. Would his account be greeted with rapturous enthusiasm? I don't think so.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Seriously weird night out: Eve Ensler delivers her monologue on the female anatomy

Old freaks of human nature



Anything less enticing than spending your hard-earned holiday gawping at bearded ladies, deformed dwarfs and gangling giants you might find hard to imagine. Not so in less enlightened times. Along with visits to the madhouse at Bedlam and the delights of a good hanging, travelling freak shows have a long history as entertainment. According to the Liverpool-based company HUB, they were still all the rage in Thirties Blackpool. A side-show featuring emaciated young women displayed in glass cases, charmingly titled *The Starving Brides*, was apparently the hit of the Golden Mile for several seasons.

There is a powerful story of collective inhumanity and individual despair to be told here. But HUB's production turns out to be a much gentler affair, touching only in passing on its ostensible subject. Instead, with the help of narrative, music, dance and none-too-visible video images, it attempts to evoke the texture of the fleeting images of the past embalmed in the failing memory of an elderly woman.

All airy sensations and ghostly glimmers, and as much about ballroom dancing and trips to the tarot reader as the sad human spectacle she witnessed in her youth, too much is going on here to too little purpose. There is a lot of portentous repetition of platitudes about the ghosts inside. Paula Hampson pirouettes and cartwheels around, representing the woman's carefree youth, and later does much the same as a starving bride.

Underneath it all, though, lies a delicate enough analogy between the luckless bride and the woman whose memory she haunts. The possible explanation for the former's self-abandonment — the shock of being deserted, reality slipping away, succumbing to a comforting dream-state — finds an echo in the latter's retreat into endless remembrance of the past. Old age, in other words, is like living in a glass case — feeding on memories, little understood by others. As the spectators cannot fathom the bride's state of mind, so the old woman's experiences elude the audience.

All well and good; but in attempting to tell a story about the impossibility of telling other people's stories, the script ends up more insubstantial than ethereal. The two performers, though, sustain a strain of elegiac melancholy, aided by the original music performed live by a five-strong ensemble. Esther Wilson impresses, turning in a touching performance as the absent-minded old woman and, briefly, an enjoyably acerbic one as the disreputable mackintoshed impresario who runs the whole sorry show.

NIGEL CLIFF

No lapse of stout party

Close to midnight, more than three hours after his show had begun, the fat drunk holding the microphone was leading a ragged singalong of *American Pie*. Who knows why. At the back of the room the waiters were impatiently clearing the glasses from the tables, waiting for what was left of the audience to go home. But you know what drunks are like: they are never happy until they have bellowed out a chorus or two of *New York, New York*. Only then would the embittered potter turned entertainer from St Helens stagger off the stage.

It was, frankly, a shambles, but quite a clever shambles in its way. An evening with Johnny Vegas amounts to a clever study in the art of incompetence. His singing voice is reminiscent of Bernard Manning at bathtime, and the vases he proudly spins on his potter's

COMEDY

wheel look more like bloated fertility symbols. The one thing he really excels at is picking verbal fights with members of the audience. Deep down, you know it is all theatre, but he weaves a wholly compelling self-portrait, lurching from boorishness to tearful self-pity in an instant as he recounts his dismal childhood. And somehow, without relying on a single conventional punchline, it is shatteringly funny.

Unlike most club comedy, the swagger conceals genuine tenderness and real seat-of-the-pants spontaneity. Vegas's creator, Michael Pennington, has reached a crossroads of sorts now. Vegas, after all, is supposed to be a professional failure who lives off memories of his salad days as a Butlin's redcoat. Now that he has been fêted at Edinburgh and has acquired his own sponsor (albeit in the form of a biscuit manufacturer), the illusion is harder to maintain. The audience can sometimes be too knowing, too quick to laugh at his bombast and his wonderful, tortured metaphors. Women sitting near the stage now respond to his clumsy advances, which is surely not the point at all.

The show that runs at the *Talk of London* until Saturday is a mix of old and new. The final segment ran far too long; the chaos and maudlin ramblings seemed too real for comfort. Still, true genius lies hidden inside that beer-belly.

CLIVE DAVIS

GALLERIES
The Tate goes shopping

ARTS

TOMORROW
New pop CDs reviewed

A million-pound biblical prize

VISUAL ART: An epic Spencer painting has been bought for the nation and **Richard Cork** is delighted

One of Stanley Spencer's most outstanding early paintings, *Zacharias and Elizabeth*, has been acquired for the nation. The Tate Gallery and Sheffield Galleries and Museums Trust have jointly purchased the picture from a private collector for £1,141,578.

The substantial price, which reflects Spencer's growing international reputation, was only raised with a £570,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, a National Art Collections Fund grant of £200,000, and generous support from the Friends of the Tate Gallery. But *Zacharias and Elizabeth* was a prize well worth winning. When the 22-year-old Spencer completed it in 1914, the result dramatically confirmed the emergence of a major new talent in British art.

Two years after he left the Slade School of Art, Spencer was back in his family's crowded home at Cookham on Thames when he painted *Zacharias and Elizabeth*. He had lived in the village all his life, and regarded it as the prime inspiration for the visions that nurtured his art.

At five feet square, the canvas was the largest he had yet worked on. Spencer later recalled how he painted it in the family dining-room. The table was tipped up to form a makeshift easel, and "Pa was giving piano lessons on my right". To add to the congestion, "other children were lined up along the dark paper-patterned wall, mostly from the back lane school, waiting their turn" for more lessons. The young Spencer's powers of concentration must have been formidable.

However much stimulus music may have provided, Spencer took his starting-point from the New Testament. St Luke's account of the priest Zacharias and his barren wife Elizabeth, both "well stricken in years", prefigures the Annunciation of Christ's birth. For the angel Gabriel appears in the temple and tells the incredulous Zacharias that Elizabeth will give birth to a son who would become John the Baptist. But Spencer was independent enough to take enormous liberties with his biblical source. The temple has vanished, and in its place a Cookham garden becomes the setting for the miracle.

He based it on the view from a cottage owned by Jack Hatch, a friendly local coalman. Spencer was allowed to wander at will through the garden, absorbing its atmosphere

> ‘He was independent enough to take enormous liberties with his source’

so completely that he would be able to convey its charged meaning in paint. Dominated by the stripped trees of Cliveden Wood extending to the horizon, it is a winter scene. The angel, who adopts a tilting, almost balletic pose in the centre, seems well wrapped up against the cold. Zacharias, making a sacrifice at his altar in the foreground, appears reluctant to acknowledge the angelic presence. But he looks strangely spellbound, as though held in fearful suspense by his awareness of an impending event.

So do all the other characters in this compelling drama. Zacharias reappears in the background, half-hidden by a fence and gazing distractedly at a nearby bush. He pays no attention to his wife, even though she stands next to him with her back to the viewer. Elizabeth's seeming unwillingness to be seen is reinforced by her curious decision to plunge her right hand into a yew tree, resting it on what Spencer described as "a tray-like frond". It suggests that, like the mythological Daphne before her, she might be about to sprout into fresh leaf.

A feeling of close, mystical accord between humans and the landscape they inhabit can be found throughout Spencer's dream-like image. Elizabeth reappears, this time in profile, behind the wall near the top of the picture. She seems to be busying herself with the garden, like the bulky figure on the far right who drags some pruned branches across the ground. The brilliant winter light dances among their leaves, and Spencer delights in picking out a myriad sparkling blades of grass as well.

This painstaking devotion to minutiae is reminiscent of the Pre-Raphaelites' early landscapes, but he took his inspiration more directly from the early Italian masters they admired. In a letter written soon after the outbreak of war in August 1914, he declared that he would serve as a medical orderly "on condition I can have Giotto, the Basilica of Assisi book, *Fra Angelico* in one pocket, and Masaccio, Masolino and Giorgione in the other". He liked the early Italians' tendency to repeat figures in a painting if they so wished, and he emulated their preference for boldly summarised forms.

Hence the pared-down simplicity of the limbs and draperies in *Zacharias and Elizabeth*, along with his decision to counter the precision of grass with immense, blurred-edged shadows spread across the lawn and up the side of the white wall. Their brooding presence gives the painting an ominous air, as if they might soon snuff out its illuminated areas. And Spencer's decision to make the wall so intrusive, slicing through the picture like the enlarged side of an enamel bath, adds to the troubled mood. While acting as a protective enclosure for Zacharias and the angel, it shuts out the anonymous female figure who balances on an uprooted tree in her effort to peer over.

Her kneeling pose, combined with the eagerness she displays in struggling to witness the event, increases the feeling of momentousness. Everyone in this haunting image seems arrested, as though overcome by the mystery inherent in the angelic encounter. Spencer intensifies their awe by removing the scene from the heat of Judaea to the frosty Berkshire countryside, investing an everyday English garden with a sense of hushed, sacred wonder.

● *The picture is on show at the Graves Art Gallery, Sheffield from next Wednesday, and comes to the Tate in London in the summer*

TATE GALLERY
In his large canvas *Zacharias and Elizabeth* (1913-14) Stanley Spencer traded the heat of Judaea for an English garden

Cred by the saxful

Stanley Turrentine is seen by many jazz aficionados as a gifted and individual player who, for much of his career, was lost to the music, succumbing to the blandishments of pop and the demands of the Top 200.

As anyone who's heard Turrentine sashay innocuously through the likes of *Little Green Apples*, *The Look of Love* or *Elusive Butterfly* will confirm, jazz and pop do not mix easily, so it was something of a relief to see the 64-year-old tenorman take the Jazz Café stage with a trio of topflight British jazz musicians playing acoustic instruments: pianist Joe Bashorun, bassist Gary Crosby and drummer Winston Clifford.

Turrentine is at heart a blues player, so a lightly swinging opener in the medium warmed both him and his band up perfectly, and even

JAZZ
Stanley Turrentine
Jazz Café

gave the latter a chance to slip easily into what is practically a local rhythm: reggae. Clearly delighted with their sparky responsiveness, Turrentine got down to business, calling, in quick succession, a relatively tricky Billy Taylor composition, Duke Ellington's luxurious ballad *In a Sentimental Mood* and the Coltrane classic *Impressions*.

To this varied fare Turrentine brought all his elegance and easygoing fluency. Having one of the most individual saxophone sounds in jazz — a combination of earnest wispiness and sharp, bluesy snap — gives him a head start, but it is his sheer experience, laced with wit (quotes from Grieg, *I Found a New Baby* and *My Favourite Things* in the Coltrane; *Paper Moon* in the Taylor) that carries the day.

A visit to Jobim's *Triste* (also containing a delightfully mischievous quote, this time from Rossini) allowed the celebrated Turrentine tone to waft sensuously across the gentle samba rhythm, then it was back to more vigorous material: *Don't Mess with Mr T*, a characteristically yearning lope written for him by Marvin Gaye. Concluding with a couple of blues numbers on which he stretched out luxuriously for chorus after chorus, Turrentine proved that you don't necessarily have to dilute jazz with pop to please the crowd.

CHRIS PARKER

French melodies without tears

There is more to *mélodies* than their tunes. *L'invitation au voyage*, as the six-week journey through French song at St John's, Smith Square is called, takes its title from one of the most beguiling and famous *mélodies* of Duparc: a perfect fusion of poem, vocal line and piano part.

Even in this first concert of the series, which will cover 120 years of repertory from Berlioz to Poulenc and Messiaen, the songs made all these characteristics quite clear. Programme notes or really informative spoken introductions might have filled in more: instead we got Roderick Swanston's talkative talking notes, full of historical detail but saying very little about the music and almost nothing about the poets.

Fortunately, the performers did all the communicating that was needed. Unusually, the cycle was shared between two singers. The soprano Geraldine McGreevy held the audience spellbound with the soft radiance of her *La spectre de la rose* and put a smile in her voice for *L'île inconnu*; Richard Edgar-Wilson was less persuasive, though still moving in his contributions.

But then the tenor was standing in for an indisposed Paul Nilon, and elsewhere in the concert he got to sing some of the less memorable numbers: two torturous songs by Franck, for instance. His light, mellifluous tone is well suited to French music, and only some straying intonation spoilt the charm and elegance of his Gounod group. With fine support from the pianist, Simon Over, his two Duparc songs were evocative.

With every performance, McGreevy is becoming a more complete artist, and here she showed greater platform presence than ever before. Excellent French and an ability to float and swell a phrase make her a natural in this music. Her Bizet songs were lively, though neither she nor the pianist caught all the seductiveness of *Adieux de l'hôtesse arabe*. In Fauré, from the detached waltz of *Le papillon et la fleur* to the whispering of *Après un rêve*, she evoked the essence of this most central of the *mélodie* composers.

JOHN ALLISON

Caressed by colour

CONCERTS
Cristina Ortiz
Queen Elizabeth Hall

A bad wardrobe day. Cristina Ortiz had picked a flouncy, 1970s-style dress whose russet colours matched the mock parquet tiles on the platform floor, and was not too far removed from her auburn hair or the screen placed behind her piano. She was barely visible. So were there contrasting shades in her playing? At first, oddly for this performer, it seemed not: there certainly could have been more poetry squeezed out of the two Poulenc *Novelettes* that launched her recital of largely out-of-the-way pieces, part of the Harrods International Piano Series.

But then she arrived at the shy, insinuating art of Federico Mompou, and she started making love to the keyboard. She played four selections from *Impresiones intimas*, early pieces written in Paris before the First World War. Catalan magic deliciously garnished with French dressing. Her fingers teased out the wistfulness in *Sad Bird*, danced with rocking rhythms in *The Boat*, and whirled round and round in the *Gypsy* rondo. "I adore Mompou," Ortiz wrote in her programme note. With good reason, too.

As sometimes happens in this Harrods series, a "live keyboard relay" caught those fingers on camera and thrust them up for scrutiny on a screen. This was of limited interest: any emotion and drama was mostly reflected in Ortiz's face, especially once she embarked on Grieg's commanding Ballade in G minor, written in the shadow of his parents' deaths. For Grieg these 14 variations on a sombre Norwegian folk song reflected feelings so painful that he could never bring himself to play them in public. Ortiz responded well to their improvisatory air, though the peaks of anguish were left unscaled.

Her skills were better displayed in two miniatures by Grieg's Scandinavian colleague Stenhammar: the G-flat major Impromptu, in particular, shimmered with warmth and delicacy. Ortiz seemed properly at home, though, when she left northern Europe for the recital's second half and moved south to music from her native Brazil.

Here her impulsive ebullience and caressing touch could be given full play. There were five exotic works by Fructuoso Vianna, and two by Oscar Lorenzo Fernández: pieces packed with intoxicating cross-rhythms, descriptive niceties (street-song cries, fruit plummeting from the trees), headlong waltzes, crunching minor chords. Before the encores, Ortiz was handed two bouquets and placed them perilously on the piano. They brightened the platform, but by this time no other colours were needed.

GEOFF BROWN

NEW CLASSICAL CDS: András Schiff's splendid vision

RECITAL

■ HAYDN
Piano Sonatas
András Schiff
Teldec 0630-17141-2 ★★★
£30.99

HAYDN is no longer, perhaps, quite so grossly neglected and misunderstood as András Schiff would have us believe: the playing of Alfred Brendel, Andreas Staier, the Quatuor Mosaiques and, of course, Schiff himself has seen to that. But if that be the excuse for this recording of nine Sonatas plus the C major Fantasia, then I'm not complaining.

Schiff's playing fleshes out his own informed and invariably wise decisions on questions of articulation, accentuation and embellishment. And, thanks to Teldec's immaculately engineered recording, these two discs also reveal beautifully Schiff's characteristic sensitivity to touch, honouring the sound of the pianos of Haydn's time with their shallower keys and smaller hammers. It's just a pity that, given Schiff's often vociferously expressed views on the merits and demerits of different modern pianos, we are not told which instrument he is using here.

No one can tell Haydn's jokes quite as brilliantly as Brendel. But then few can play the innocent as aptly and convincingly as Schiff. He does it delightfully in the G minor and C major Sonatas; and his sustained fluency brings splendour to the grander visions of No 33 in C minor and No 62 in E flat.

HILARY FINCH

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345 023498

MUSICAL

■ RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN
South Pacific
Martin/Tabbert/Pinza
Sony SMK 60722 ★★★
£10.49

"WHAT do they want two basses for?" Mary Martin was reputed to have growled when invited to co-star with Ezio Pinza, leading *Don Giovanni* of his day, in *South Pacific*. But Richard Rodgers knew precisely what he was doing. Martin was not just a belter. As Ensign Nellie Forbush she could sing (*Wonderful Guy*) and she could swing (*Honey Bun*). Rodgers responded with a series of numbers for her which were all to become standards, apart from a couple axed before opening night, but included as an appendix in Sony's excellent remastering of the original 1949 cast recording.

He was less generous to Pinza, as the French plantation owner Emile de Beque, who only gets one good solo. But what a song! *One Enchanted Evening* makes up for such parsimony and Pinza, in his late fifties, puts it across with all the charm that had made him the darling of the Met. Charm of a lighter kind comes from William Tabbert as Lt Cable, and the US Marines match the brass of Salvatore dell'Isola's band for lustiness. A delight.

JOHN HIGGINS

ORCHESTRAL

■ CHAUSSON
Symphony in B Flat etc
BBC Philharmonic/
Tortelier
Chandos Chan 9650 ★★★
£14.99

PUPIL of Franck but disciple of Wagner, Ernest Chausson developed a style owing much to both, and none the worse for that. This latest disc in the excellent series from Yan Pascal Tortelier and the BBC Philharmonic, exploring the byways of the French repertoire, contains virtually all the orchestral music of Chausson that survives.

The influence of Franck is heard in the Symphony in B flat (Chausson's only completed work in the genre), both in its soundworld and in its cyclic recurring themes. The Wagner of *Die Walküre*, on the other hand, comes to mind in the symphonic poem *Viviane*, where the enchantress of that name casts spells to music strongly reminiscent of the Magic Sleep in that opera.

Another symphonic poem, *Soir de fête*, and Chausson's own orchestration of two dances from his incidental music to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* complete a disc that amply demonstrates the accomplishments of a composer who might have achieved much more but for his premature death in a cycling accident.

BARRY MILLINGTON

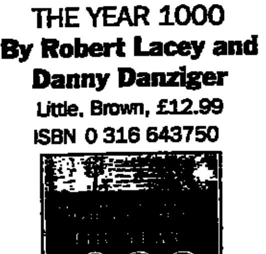
★ Worth hearing
★★ Worth considering
★★★ Worth buying

BOOKS

Honey still for tea

Once more unto the brink: peering over the rim of the last millennium, Ian McIntyre files his report

THE YEAR 1000
By Robert Lacey and Danny Danziger
Little, Brown, £12.99
ISBN 0 316 643750



"What does the word millennium mean, grandpapa?" "Different things to different people, my dear. To the prosaic, a period of 1,000 years. To those who take the Book of Revelation literally, an apocalyptic vision of Christ returning to impose direct rule. To a latter-day Candide, the happy state to which the United Kingdom will be reduced when the perfectibility-men of new Labour have completed their third term . . ." Amanda? Damn the child, she's just like jesting Pilate.

We are not quite at the stage of having to call in Max Clifford, but the pre-publicity for the Second Millennium Show is not entirely what its sponsors might have wished. Episcopal sogginess? The vapourings of those swaying in the howdah of the great white elephant of Greenwich? *Coraggio!* For those who feel that the times are out of joint, that they are battling some sort of pre-millennial hangover before the party has even begun, Robert Lacey and Danny Danziger have concocted a delightful and refreshing pick-me-up.

"It was an oak tree that provided the ink, from a boil-like pimple growing out of its bark. A wasp had gnawed into the wood to lay its eggs there, and, in self-defence, the tree formed a gall round the intrusion, circular and hard-skinned like a crab-apple, full of clear acid." Not a bad opening for authors who describe themselves modestly as "working journalists". In a mere 200 pages they have compiled a colourful and highly entertaining picture of what life was like in Anglo-Saxon England at the turn of the first millennium. It is as stylish a popular social history as one could find.

They give credit for much of the leg-work to Nina Drummond. It was her idea to cast the book in the form of a calendar, a month per chapter, to mimic the rhythm of life in the year 1000. They took as their model the Julius Work Calendar, produced in the studio of Canterbury Cathedral around AD 1020, and it is a device which works admirably.

It was a much emptier world than ours — one person for every 40 or 50 today. A sturdy and healthy lot, the Anglo-Saxons, apparently, and not much shorter in stature than we are, even though they had no spinach. (Popeye would only have flourished after the return of the Crusaders.) There was no tea or sugar, either, although there was plenty of honey — the Anglo-Saxons were much cleverer bee-keepers than the Romans. Lampreys were plentiful, and imports of salt whale blubber were available, too, for those who liked that sort of thing.

Social life was notably static. Lacey and Danziger suggest that the closest modern parallel would be with "the restricted and repetitious circle of friends" encountered in soap operas. (They should brace themselves for intemperate protests from the National Federation of Archers Fan Clubs.) There were no playing cards, although there was backgammon, and a form of noughts and crosses known as ticktacktoe; the Anglo-Saxons also went in for elaborate riddles, full of salacious references to hairy onions and the pleasures of butter churning.

The National Health Service still lay some way in the future, and was therefore not yet in crisis. In the absence of Viagra, those who felt themselves insufficiently virile turned to the herb agrimony and boiled its yellow flowers in milk (cooked in Welsh ale, however, it had the contrary effect). Lower-back pain was believed to respond to the smoke of smouldering goats' hair, and baldness retreated before an ointment made from the ashes of burnt bees.

American readers will feel better for knowing that every one of the words Neil Armstrong uttered when he stepped onto the Moon was already part of Old English by the year 1000. Lacey and Danziger also point out that much of the earthier language often described as "Anglo-Saxon" is nothing of the sort. Opponents of the Maastricht treaty will find ammunition for their cause when they learn that *fokkinge*, *cunte* and *crappe* are all much later imports, probably coming from Holland in the later Middle Ages.

It was an age of faith: "People believed as fervently in the power of saints' bones as many today believe that wheat bran or jogging or psychoanalysis can increase the sum of human happiness." I particularly enjoyed the account of the permitted signs by which otherwise silent monks might communicate, all set out in the *Monasteriales Indicia*: "One gets the impression that mealtimes in a Benedictine refectory were rather like a gathering of baseball coaches, all furiously beckoning, squeezing their earlobes, meaningfully rubbing their fingers up and down the sides of their noses, and smoothing their hands over their stomachs."

Lacey and Danziger could not quite decide how to end their book, and they do so rather lamely ("Whether we today display more wisdom or common humanity is an open question . . ."), but that is a minor blemish. *The Year 1000* could be read with profit by many whose approach to historical writing is much more ponderous. It is an elegant and painless lesson in how to combine serious purpose with lightness of touch.

BRIDGEMAN

Shipbuilding, year 1000-style, from a section of the Bayeux Tapestry: life was quieter but some things stayed the same — people amused each other telling jokes about hairy onions

An unorthodox look at Russia

NATASHA FAIRWEATHER

RUSSIA: THE WILD EAST
Granta, issue 64
£7.99
ISBN 0903141 24 8

New Year is the time when Russians, trained by years of state sponsored atheism, celebrate the pagan aspects of Christmas by feasting, putting presents beneath a decorated tree and fighting with their families. But Russians have more cause than most to drink themselves into oblivion as they celebrate the approach of the new millennium this year: for Russia has endured a bloody and bitter 20th century. An aura of suffering hovers like a martyr's halo over most of the pieces in the absorbing new issue of Granta.

Typically, it is the contributions by foreigners that reveal an overt preoccupation with history. Orlando Figes sets the tone in his observations on the burial of the murdered family of Tsar Nicholas II in St Petersburg last year. Shocked by the general indifference to the proceedings themselves and the symbolism of the act, Figes, a Cambridge historian, offers contradictory advice. At first he advocates the study of history as the only balm for Russia's national wounds, but then he recommends that Russia should cast the past aside in order to focus on the challenges of a difficult future.

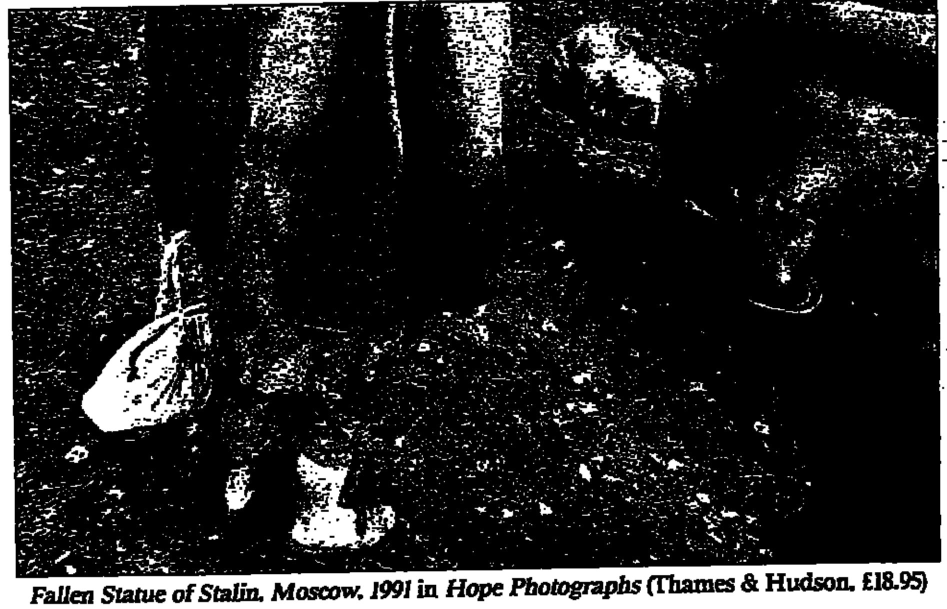
Colin Thubron finds Russians doing this anyway in his lyrical meander around the Siberian town of Omsk. He shadows a hearty group of predominantly female pilgrims as they dig the foundations for a monastery in a place where countless thousands of victims of a Soviet gulag lie buried in mass graves. Troubled by the ease at which the past is buried and forgotten, but affected by the mid-summer gaiety around him, Thubron begins to view "Russia's atheist past", and by extension the Soviet era, as "no more than an overcast day in the long orthodox summer".

The Soviet era seems more like the eternal night of a Siberian winter to the inhabitants of Norilsk, the nickel-mining town perched on the Arctic Circle. The population, made up predominantly of former prisoners and guards from the nearby Soviet camps, have never dealt with their complicity in the outrages of the past, but they have found common ground, according to documentary film-maker Angus Macqueen, in bemoaning the terrible present state.

Alongside a poignant memoir by Charlotte Hobson of a young Russian dreamer called Pavel Pravda who could not find a truth to believe in and overdosed on heroin, and Masha Gessen's humorous look at her grandmother's Soviet compromises, this issue of Granta would be worth reading for the short story by Andrei Platonov alone. Platonov was one of the greatest writers of the Soviet era whose proletarian roots and youthful Communist ardour made his eventual disillusionment with the system all the greater. No writer has a bleaker vision of life. *The River Potudan* is a story from Platonov's 1937 collection of the same name. Magnificently translated by a team of three, this muted love story trembles with the pain of suppressed emotion and it asks if love is the best one can hope for in life.

Amid the gritty realism, compounded by a series of striking photographs from the Chechen war, Victor Pelevin's fantasy of how a drunkard's job interview nearly ends in a ritual suicide is an amusing introduction to the work of one of Russia's most promising contemporary novelists.

JAMES NUBILE

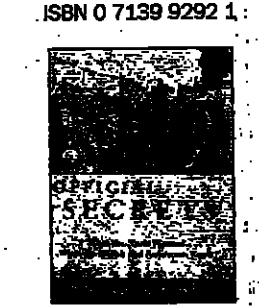


Fallen Statue of Stalin, Moscow, 1991 in *Hope Photographs* (Thames & Hudson, £18.95)

A disaster decoded, but not averted

DAVID STAFFORD

OFFICIAL SECRETS
By Richard Breitman
Allen Lane, £20
ISBN 0 7139 9292 1



What did the British and American governments know about the Holocaust and could they have stopped it?

Imagine this. At Bletchley Park, spearhead of the Allies' codebreaking efforts, an intelligence analyst reads an intercept revealing Hitler ordering the use of Jews as forced labour on the Eastern front. A later intercept shows the commandant at Auschwitz demanding that a shipment of Dutch Jews be routed directly to his camp and not diverted for labour in Silesia. What is the decoder to make of the intercepts? Ruthless exploitation or systematic genocide?

Thousands of such documents still exist. Most remain secret. Richard Breitman, however, a distinguished American scholar of the Holocaust, has unearthed samples released in 1997. The contents of his book, rather than its style, make it compulsive reading. Yet his decoding of the decrypts provokes questions as well as answers.

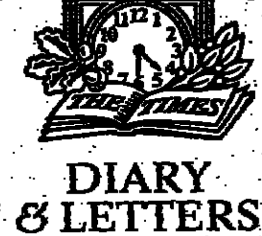
At its heart lie some 60 files of decrypts of transmissions of the SS and the German Order Police, tasked with keeping order and dealing with emergencies. It also had militarised battalions, was headed by a fervent Nazi, Kurt Dalegue, and carried out the mass executions of Jews in Russia. Codebreakers cracked the Order Police code as early as 1939. It contains tales of shootings, reprisals, and executions.

This is what Allied codebreakers read. But what did it all mean? Dalegue was more significant than previously realised, and far from hasty improvisations these were ideologically motivated and long planned mass murders. But the central theme and motivating passion of Breitman's book is that the British and Americans had a clear view of what was happening and should, and could, have done more to help the Jews. Here the historian's enemy, hindsight, looms large.

Breitman recognises the danger, pointing out that the Holocaust is a postwar term coined only after the extermination camps were discovered and the full dimensions of their horrors understood. Yet how can any of us today truly unlearn what we know? At the time Allied spokesmen and propagandists were slow to single out the Jews as special victims of the Nazis. Political calculation here was obvious, not least the fear of fuelling Zionist demands over Palestine.

Breitman, understandably, is critical of this. But an historian of intelligence might also ask about the broader codebreaking context. Evidence of crimes against the Jews was irrefutable. But what did the decrypts reveal about massacres of other groups — Serbs, Polish intellectuals, Gypsies, for example? How easily could it be concluded that a Holocaust, as distinct from separate atrocities, was taking place? We need comparative data to understand the challenge the analysts faced.

Churchill has had a good press over his reaction to Hitler's treatment of the Jews, but Breitman reveals an unexplained curiosity here. The Prime Minister avidly read decrypts of Order Police and SS killings over the summer of 1941. Then the Secret Intelligence Service decided that his future briefings would not cover such material because it was now obvious what it contained. Did the decision reflect Churchill's wish, or that of someone else? Had he grown weary of it all, or did his intelligence chiefs fear that he might let slip the source of his knowledge and thus alert the enemy to Bletchley Park's war-winning exploits? There are intriguing hints that this might have been the reason. But that, too, remains an official secret.



■ GREAT disappointment in the glitterati crowd attending the Whitbread Book Awards on Tuesday night. The delightful historian Amanda Foreman, author of *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, showed up to collect her award for Biography of the Year . . . fully clothed.

■ *THE OUP row rumbles on (see also Bibliomane, opposite). Reports reach us of a meeting of the Oxford English Faculty Board on Monday, at which Ivon Asquith, managing director of OUP's academic division, tried to justify the loss of the poetry list to the assembled dons. He proclaimed that dropping the poets had saved the firm the tremendous sum of — wait for it — £13,000. Church-mouse academics might be forgiven for thinking even they could club together to restore the list.*

■ HARRY POTTER may have missed the Whitbread Children's Book Award by a whisker, but he will still cast his spell over King's Cross station in London today when muggles from all over Britain will discover that they too can find Platform 9¾ for a trip on a steam train into his magic world. Harry's creator, J. K. Rowling, will be giving a reading, and the mysterious event celebrates the transformation of her second book, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, into paperback. A time capsule containing predictions by children for the seventh Harry Potter book, due to be published in five years' time, will be buried. Long may the magic last!

■ THE novelist Julian Barnes enjoyed being on the jury for the French Prix Novembre. He has never been invited on to to a British literary jury — probably because so many of the contenders might be his friends. In Paris, he voted for the winning book, a novel called *Les particules élémentaires* by Michel Houellebecq, which had been banned from the Prix Goncourt because of its outrageous sex scenes. He had always thought there was a rather doubtful background to French literary prizes, but he was not offered a centime for his vote. However, he was invited on to the French one o'clock TV news to discuss his work — in Britain, he said, "I would only be on World at One if I had shot a postman or been accused of molesting a child".

■ *A great deal has been written about Anne Frank but, perhaps surprisingly, there has not been a full-scale biography yet. Soon there will be three. This spring (when Anne Frank would have been 70) Viking is bringing out a book called* Roses From the Earth *by Carol Ann Lee. Bloomsbury has a translation of a German biography by Melissa Muller, and Macmillan has another German biography aimed mainly at children, this one by Miriam Pressler, who edited the diaries. But the story of Anne Frank is becoming the mystery story of Anne Frank. All three books set out to discover who it was that really betrayed the Frank family to the Germans.*

■ EVERYTHING has a literary flavour in France. For the millennium, the French are going to plant a "green meridian" — a line of 10,000 trees along the meridian of Paris, stretching from Dunkirk to Prats-de-Mollo on the Mediterranean. And what has the Minister of Culture, Catherine Trautmann, to say about it? "This is a work particularly rich in symbols," she remarked, planting the first tree, "not only from the point of view of aesthetics and ecology, but also from the point of view of liberty, because only the voluntary acts of Frenchmen will give it life!" Shades of Rousseau — and Jean-Paul Sartre . . .

■ E-mail us at: books@the-times.co.uk

Subtle harmonies

IAN BRUNSKILL

CANONE INVERSO
By Paolo Maurensig
Phoenix House, £12.99
ISBN 1 861691 35 7

Paolo Maurensig's *The Lüneburg Variation*, published in Italian in 1993 and in English in 1998, was one of the most accomplished and ambitious first novels to have appeared in recent years. *Canone Inverso*, elegantly translated by Jenny McPhee, is its no less impressive successor.

What Maurensig's debut did with chess, his second book does with music. *The Lüneburg Variation* took the disciplined aggression of the board game and used it as its literal subject; as a metaphor for real violence; and as a means of organising a complex narrative. The new novel's title refers in music to a form of imitative counterpoint whereby an ascending interval in the first voice of a canon becomes a descending one in the second. In this formal structuring device Maurensig finds not only a dramatic but a moral dimension: the two main characters of his novel are bound by an intricate relationship of dependence and imitation; if one of them advances, it is at the other's expense.

But who is imitating whom? And how can we tell? The central narrative is set within a cunning multiple framework worthy of Maurensig's compatriot Italo Calvino, or of a classic 19th-century German novella. Linking the elaborate sequence of tales within tales is a violin. A fine instrument, by the noted 17th-century Austrian maker Jacob Stainer, it has its pegs set not in the usual scroll, but in a small head with "a cruel and threatening face".

How that distinguished and sinister instrument came to be played by a vagabond entertainer in a late-night Viennese bar is the mystery at the heart of the book. Its solution lies in the history of two young musicians, the one an illegitimate boy from a modest Hungarian home, the other heir to an Austrian barony.

Their awkward friendship begins when they meet as pupils of the renowned Collegium Musicum, a bizarre institution run more like a prison or an asylum than a leading music school. It ends amid one of those grandly dysfunctional Austrian households to which Thomas Bernhard used to do such savage justice: an isolated castle where dogs roam the halls in packs, and decrepit retainers serve dinner at seven sharp to cardinals, atheists, alchemists, and an invalid baroness who says nothing at all but "Gustav!"

Canone Inverso is plotted with the taut sophistication of a thriller. But the refinements of its construction, though dazzling, are far from gratuitous, and far from trivial in intent. Maurensig is not afraid to tackle some of the century's most challenging themes. He writes of evil and guilt; of the Holocaust; of how history makes us what we are, and how we remake our own histories. The formal artifice of his work lends a telling precision to his discussion of such things. Where other writers might resort to bombast, he achieves a rare and quite unsettling restraint.

IN metro ON SATURDAY

Up and out in London and New York: Martin Aston talks to John Cale about his autobiography, *What's Welsh for Zen* — from his upbringing in Wales to the Velvet Underground and his career as a solo artist

ALSO: Marcel Berlins reviews the new novel by Scottish crime writer, Ian Rankin; Emily Prager's reworking of *Lolita*; and General Custer rides again in Evan S. Connell's *Son of the Morning Star*

BOOKS

When depression and identity meet

Two books on the study and experience of depression bring together the science of the brain with the mysteries of the mind

Erica Wagner

Shakespeare identified the problem before the scientists. "In sooth, I know not why I am so sad," Antonio laments in *The Merchant of Venice*. "It wearies me, you say it wearies you;/ But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,/ What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born/ I am to learn;/ And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,/ That I have much ado to know myself."

If Antonio does not know himself, what can he know? He sees the world around him in relation to himself; he cannot help it. If that self should change, what then? Robert Burton would not produce his *Anatomy of Melancholy* for another 20 years, but it is clear that by the 17th century what we might think of as a very modern problem — depression — was well established in Western consciousness, and recognised as going to the root of what makes us who we are. Carlyle would note how Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, published in 1774, gave expression to "the nameless unrest and longing discontent which was then agitating every bosom".

Malignant sadness. Burton called the nameless unrest that made Antonio a stranger to himself. It is as good a description as any of that dark void. To those who have not peered over the edge, the opening words of Lewis Wolpert's book about depression — part memoir, part investigation — may seem an impossible overstatement. "It was the worst experience of my life," he writes. "More terrible even than watching my wife die of cancer." He is, he concedes, "ashamed" to admit this. But depression, as his moving and enlightening book charts, is not "feeling low", is not "worrying about nothing", is *not* — despite Burton's (and Wolpert's) earnest exhortation to "be not idle" in the face of it — something to be snapped out of. It is an illness whose consequences can be devastating, whose symptoms are myriad and which has proved remarkably resistant to treatment.

Wolpert is a biologist. His aim is, in part, to put depression under the microscope. He ranges across cultures and through psychology and physiology to discover why some people get depressed, how a cure might be effected and how the illness might be avoided. Yet, near the end of his book, he admits that "it would be misleading to say that depression is understood": quite an admission for a scientist.

That is, to some extent, its fascination. If there is no precise, chemical or biological explanation for this phenomenon, it is because there is as yet no precise, chemical or biological explanation for what we call the soul. A discussion of brain cells, synapses and neurotransmitters won't quite do; as far as emotion is concerned humanity still appears to dwell in a medieval world of "humours" that mysteriously colour experience. For this reason it is all the more startling when a "purely chemical" change alters personality dramatically.

It is this kind of alteration that overtakes Lauren Slater. Psychoactive drugs are nothing new; drugs that work with the apparent precision of Prozac are. Prozac is a selective serotonin-reuptake inhibitor: it stops the brain reabsorbing the mood-affecting neurotransmitter serotonin. Slater already had a history of mental illness in 1988, when she was 26 and first given the then brand-new drug.

Prozac Diary charts her chemical transformation. Before Prozac there were eating disorders, a compulsion to tap and check, voices inside her head — after Prozac there was health, a condition she can barely recognise. One morning she wakes up to a world subtly and yet enormously changed: "It was as though I'd been visited by a blind piano tuner who had crept into my apartment at night, who had tweaked the ivory bones of my body, the taut strings in my skull, and now, when I pressed on myself, the same notes but with a mellower, fuller sound sprang out."

But Lauren Slater has been ill all her life. The atmosphere inside her bell jar was oppressive, but it was familiar; the world no longer seen through glass is a foreign and confusing place. And yet the world has not changed: *she* has. The voices she heard did not make her "happy", but they were, in a sense, her friends and comforters: now they are gone. Her "ill" self wrote stories and poems; her "healthy" self does not. Is something missing? Is it worth the trade?

Slater has no answers. This is an extremely personal document, and has some of the failings of the genre of "creative non-fiction": the language can be overblown and the reader is not always as interested in Slater as she is in herself. She is, however, a perceptive writer, and her focus on her own experience means she does not pronounce or over-generalise as Elizabeth Wurtzel did in *Prozac Nation*. Yet in raising questions — in making much ado to know herself — Slater illuminates not just her own illness and how its nature is entwined with her core but adds a valuable contribution to the debate over what makes us — in this pharmacological age — exactly what we are.

MALIGNANT SADNESS
The Anatomy of Depression
By Lewis Wolpert
Faber, £9.99
ISBN 0 571 19172 X

PROZAC DIARY
By Lauren Slater
Hamish Hamilton, £9.99
ISBN 0 241 13749 7

In short

A poet for the people

SELECTED POEMS
By Langston Hughes
Serpent's Tail, £7.99
ISBN 1 85242 127 4

LANGSTON HUGHES, dubbed the "Negro Poet Laureate", wrote verse to sing in the bath, shout in mid-argument and hum under your breath on the way to work. For 40 years, until his death in 1967, Hughes wrote about what he knew best: the lives of ordinary blacks in the United States. Breaking with the more traditional meters of the European school, these jazz-influenced poems and lyrics, such as *Song For Billie Holiday*, *The Weary Blues* and *Misery*, mesmerise with their easy rhythm and sweet simplicity.

Too tall tales

SHENANIGANS
An Anthology of Fresh Irish Fiction
Sceptre, £6.99
ISBN 0 340 71269 4

SHENANIGANS will win prizes for pretentiousness if nothing else. In the publicity which accompanies this portfolio of Irish writers, co-editor Sarah Champion reveals her ambition "to become a digital nomad travelling the world with just a Powerbook and a mobile". The writing itself — with the exceptions of Bridget O'Connor's *The Alien Invasion* and Colum McCann's *As if There Were Trees* — reads like sixth-form essays: light on plot and heavy on clanging pop-drugs references.

Call time

SIDEREAL TIME
By Christopher Meredith
Seren, £7.95
ISBN 1 85411 239 2

A SIDEREAL year is measured by the apparent motion of the stars, and is longer than a solar year by 20 minutes 23 seconds. This is, arguably, the most lucid part of Christopher Meredith's third novel. Although his central question is one of the most interesting in metaphysics — how do we come to terms with being transient beings in an infinite Universe? — he does not get beyond the premise. His impossibly elusive experimental prose and unsympathetic characters turn a fascinating subject into a turgid waste of time.

Latin loves

LUCKY IN LOVE
By David Mourão-Ferreira
Carcanet, £9.95
ISBN 1 85754 288 2

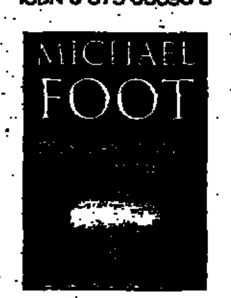
A FORMER Minister of Culture for the Portuguese Government, David Mourão-Ferreira chooses Lisbon in the years following the bloodless revolution of 1974 as the backdrop to his tale. A sculptor, who is experiencing the sort of second coming of age we read about in glossy mags, reviews the women who have moulded him into the figure he is. What ensues is a story of two love affairs, tantalising enough to make the least prim Arts Minister blush like a schoolgirl.

ALEX O'CONNELL

Beyond the big bang

First we got the bomb, and that was good . . . **Tariq Ali** admires Michael Foot's anti-nuclear stance

DR STRANGELOVE, I PRESUME
By Michael Foot
Victor Gollancz, £16.99
ISBN 0 575 06693 8



If modern science exemplifies the dialectic of good and evil then nothing represents evil so clearly as the research, design and production of nuclear weapons of mass destruction. In the bomb lies the spirit that could negate all.

The decision by India and Pakistan to test nuclear weapons has stirred dormant passions in Michael Foot, a veteran nuclear disarmer and now the King Lear of old Labour. Free, at last, of the burdensome symbols of power, unencumbered by the need to please any Establishment, Foot has rediscovered his old CND badge. The nuclear posturing in South Asia has reminded him that what he once thought and argued remains much closer to the truth than the warmongering Clinton and his Downing Street echo.

Foot was shocked and upset by the decision of India and Pakistan to go nuclear and he felt like Goethe's Faust that: "This drives me near to desperate distress!/ Such elemental power unharnessed, purposeless!/ There dares my spirit soar past all it knew:/ Here I would fight, this I would subdue!"

There are aspects of this book which irritate. Foot is besotted with the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty of India. He takes the late Indira Gandhi too much at face value. He treats her son, the late Rajiv Gandhi, as if he were a sage. In reality the mother was a cynical and ruthless manipulator and the son a simpleton who should never have entered politics. Sentimentality in a volume of this sort weakens the impact and should be reserved for a memoir. There was also, surprisingly, no reference to the European Nuclear Disarmament network or the late E.P. Thompson, whose passion and pamphleteering ignited the rebirth of an anti-nuclear movement during the Eighties.

Nonetheless, there is much wisdom in this book and much anger against the complacency of Western leaders who watched calmly as the nuclear monopoly was broken by Israel, South Africa, India and Pakistan, China and, no doubt, others of which we are yet unaware. Foot, aided by recent works on the subject, takes us back to the Cuba crisis of 1962 when the world was on the brink of nuclear conflict and a majority of Kennedy's generals were for war. He argues that the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, was the real victor. He had saved Castro and won concessions nearer home.

AP

The pilot Paul Tibbets and the B29 bomber which dropped the first atomic bomb

The real hero of this volume, however, is Khrushchev's heir, Mikhail Gorbachev: "In my estimation, he did more than any other single individual engaged in the ugly trade of world politics to make possible a peaceful ending of our war-ridden century . . . whatever else he was or was not, he was the most passionate nuclear disarmer who ever appeared on the planet."

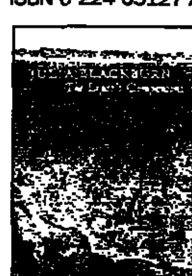
The heart of the problem lies in the post-1989 globalisation process that we are living through. If Britain has the bomb why not India? Delhi's apologists often pose the question and there is no relativist response. The only way to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons is by the strength of example: a Europe nuclear-free from the Atlantic to the Urals would represent a tremendous leap forward.

This is not simply Foot's view, but a position articulated by the former United States Secretary of Defence, Robert McNamara. It is, alas, not a view shared by Messrs Blair and Cook and, given the way new Labour has structured the old party, it is unlikely that the subject could ever be openly and democratically discussed at a party conference. This irritates the old bibliophile and hence this book, which is a gentle, reasoned call to arms against the insanity of maintaining nuclear weapons. If it succeeds in putting the nuclear question back on the map of contemporary politics in Britain it will have served its purpose.

A long walk back from the land of grief

RUTH SCURR

THE LEPER'S COMPANIONS
By Julia Blackburn
Jonathan Cape, £19.99
ISBN 0 224 05127 X



The trajectory of Julia Blackburn's career is fascinating. In 1979 she began with a collection of aboriginal responses to European culture called *The White Men*. In 1989, she wrote a sympathetic biography of Charles Waterton, traveller, conservationist and English eccentric. This was followed by two more books about famously isolated people: Napoleon in exile on St Helena, and Daisy Bates in the desert. In 1995, Blackburn's first novel, *The Book of Colour*, explored the function of memory in a troubled 20th-century family, shifting between the Seychelles, Mauritius and England.

The Leper's Companions owes something to each of its predecessors. Its central theme is bereavement. The unnamed narrator has suffered a nameless loss and longs only to escape from pain. The site of the narrator's escape and recovery is a seaside village in 15th-century England, rife with hunger, disease and superstition. In this place where life is nasty, brutish and short there are a great many who grieve: Sally, whose husband was cursed by a mermaid and lured under the sea; the shoemaker's wife whose husband was blind, then mad and finally dead; the priest who has lost his youth ministering to his parishioners.

Most enigmatic of all is the leper, a biblical character who links the novel's universal and historical perspectives by mediating between the displaced narrator and the 15th-century villagers, and joining them in a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He is the novel's cynical nucleus, an emblem of the partial recovery and permanent scarring that most of us can expect from bereavement.

Fortunately, this austere and unedited guide to grief is made loveable by Blackburn's historical imagination. She has a peculiar talent for finding the tiny details that revive the past: the white banner in Saint Mark's Square announcing that a pilgrim ship is ready for passengers; the lion of Venice and red cross of Jerusalem flying from the rigging; the warehouses supplying seasickness pills, plague pills, dried food and holy relics.

Blackburn is even more startling on the subject of women's history. She points out the advantages of being post-menopausal before undertaking a pilgrimage; illustrates the misinterpretation of postnatal depression as possession by the Devil; and a woman in the stocks surrounded by her snuffling children like a sow in the farrow pen. Blackburn is never offensively earnest; she wears her talents like a modern Renaissance woman: with elegance and an affable ease. While it is unlikely to be the climax of her literary career, *The Leper's Companions* is a significant step on the way.

Fashion's prisoner

BEL MOONEY

HERO OF THE UNDERWORLD
By Jimmy Boyle
Serpent's Tail, £9.99
ISBN 1 85242 608 X

About 25 years ago I spent over an hour in a cell in Barlinnie Prison in Glasgow, talking to a lifer who had one of the worst reputations in the city. The criminal was slight, quietly spoken and intelligent. With no attempt to gloss the violence of his life, he made a formidable case for the view that while prison may punish, it is counter-productive and inhuman for it to be one of the circles of hell. Even then, Jimmy Boyle had already started to study, sculpt and write. His story demonstrated how upbringing could corrupt, a savage prison regime brutalise, and the smallest degree of understanding offer the possibility of redemption.

Boyle was released in 1982, after serving 15 years. While still inside he published two autobiographies, *A Sense of Freedom* and *The Pain of Confinement*, which are required reading for anyone who seeks to understand crime and punishment. The first volume, especially, is written in a dense, honest prose lifted throughout by a questing intelligence. I can still recall the admiration I felt, first reading it in 1977, knowing that there were many in the prison establishment and the criminal underworld who wanted Boyle to stay inside until his spirit was broken. The book proved it never would be.

Such knowledge cannot help but set up expectations. Boyle's first novel comes pre-praised by no less a trio than Steven Berkoff, Ronan Bennett and Helena Kennedy, QC, and his reviewer must be truthful and admit wanting to share their admiration. Yet *Hero of the Underworld* falls so far short of the "Swift-Burroughs-Kesey-London" comparisons heaped on it as to make that praise seem dangerously close to patronage.

John Ferguson is a con who, with a fine sense of irony, calls himself "Hero", and is released from a prison known as "The Institution", only to descend into an underworld where excrement, viscerae, vomit and a diet of rats are the staple fare. People are known only by nicknames, and what rage is felt is directed against the brutes who languish in other circles of the darkness, rather than those above. The picaresque structure falls flat and when it attempts reflection the prose verges on the jejune.

With real regret I say that Boyle has shown what he is capable of, but his novel cannot be mentioned in the same breath as his autobiographical volumes. In restricting himself to knockabout Gothic horror and wallowing in the scatological at the expense of real characterisation, he has imposed limits on his soul as sad as they are fashionable.

BIBLIOMANE

■ NOW Oxford University Press has announced its intention to phase out its Clarendon Press imprint, because it is "anachronistic" — like our cathedrals, or Chaucer, or the House of Lords.

OUP is used to being enormously profitable, but has been having a tough time recently. It made a bad investment in Mexico, and its vast English Language Teaching division has made some mistakes. But it remains twice the size of Cambridge University Press, and larger than all the American university presses put together. To jeopardise, or even compromise, its unrivalled record in academic publishing is commercially as well as intellectually disastrous. Yet this appears to be what is happening, beginning with the music publishing department, which is now headed by an executive with no musical background.

Oxford's proprietary hold on that invaluable asset the English language remains strong, and the overseas business can be recovered. The university should stop trying to milk the Press quite so ruthlessly, and the delegates should not panic. In a firm so large, with such a past, and with charitable status, there must remain an island where profit does not come first. And it should be called the Clarendon Press.

■ *FRANK MARTIN has been making prints and illustrating books for 50 years. His work is derivative rather than distinctive, but the attractive selection in* The Wood Engravings of Frank Martin *(Previous Parrot Press, 280 ordinary copies, £86) shows how versatile he has been. His cutting is not subtle or modulated, but stark, and his favourite ladies are mostly starkers. He is at his best with either the emblematic or the jovial and comic. Unfortunately, Hal Bishop's lively and deeply informative introduction is marred by grammatical blunders, and the referencing is chaotic.*

A woodcut by Frank Martin for the Folio Society, 1961

JIM McCUE

Court of Appeal — Law Report January 28 1999 — Court of Appeal

Balancing factors in dealing with delay

Southwark London Borough Council v Nejad

Before Lord Justice Roch and Lord Justice Waller

[Judgment January 21]

It was not always incumbent on a court to grant leave to lodge a bill for taxation and allow the question of penalty to be decided by a taxing master, since the power of refusing an extension had to be preserved to protect a party from unfairness, but that procedure was one of the few circumstances which allowed for a penalty to be meted out for delay and for an assessment of the degree of penalty required.

A judge in exercising his discretion should not adopt a mechanistic approach to extensions of time but had to balance all factors including the lack of an explanation for the delay or the frankness of any explanation given.

The Court of Appeal so stated in a reserved judgment when allowing the appeal of London Borough of Southwark against the decision of Judge Cox on December 2, 1997. The judge dismissed an appeal from an order of District Judge Zimmels of September 19, 1997 whereby leave to lodge a bill of costs out of time was refused.

The order for costs was made in possession proceedings against Mr Ahmed Nejad on August 11, 1994. Application to lodge the bill was made in December 1996. No explanation was offered for the two-year delay.

Mr Donald Broatch for the council; Mr William McCormick for Mr Nejad.

LORD JUSTICE WALLER said that the appeal raised for the second time in the Court of Appeal in a matter of weeks an issue as to whether and in what circumstance an extension of time should be given for the lodging of a bill of costs following the making of an order for costs in favour of a party: see *Toniello v Top Deck Ski Ltd* (*The Times* December 7, 1998).

It was not in dispute that it was open to a court to grant an extension of time for the lodging of a bill of costs: see Order 13, rule 4 of the County Court Rules 1981 (SI 1981 No 1687, as amended by County Court (Amendment No 3) Rules (SI 1991 No 1382).

It was also not in dispute that the taxing officer had a discretion to disallow some of the costs where a party failed without good reason to commence taxation timeously: see Order 62, rule 28(4) of the Rules of the Supreme Court which applied in the county court by virtue of Order 38, rule 1(3) of the County Court Rules.

It was that procedure which Lord Justice Auld had thought was appropriate in *Toniello* rather than a blanket refusal to extend time.

It was important to bear in mind in exercising the discretion under Order 62, rule 28(4) that a taxing master could penalise a party for delay: that is, simply not allow costs whether or not the delay had caused prejudice to the other party and to emphasise the necessity for there to be no delay: see *Enfield London Borough Council v P* ([1996] 1 FLR 621).

The first question was whether having regard to the taxing master's powers it was always incumbent on a court to grant leave to lodge a bill for taxation and allow any penalty to be decided by him.

His Lordship did not understand that Lord Justice Auld in *Toniello* was saying that there would be no cases where it was appropriate simply to refuse an extension.

What had to be borne in mind in any case was that a blanket refusal stopped the process in limine and possibly without as full an investigation into the facts as the taxing master might be able to carry out.

The present procedure was one of the few circumstances where to provide an extension still allowed a penalty to be meted out for the delay; it further allowed for an assessment of the degree of penalty required to fit the crime of delay.

But clearly the draconian power of refusing an extension had to be preserved in order to protect a respondent from even having to incur the trouble and expense of taxation where the delay was such or the prejudice was such as to make it unfair that he should have to do so.

The principles to be applied were from *Finnegan v Parkside Health Authority* ([1998] 1 WLR 411) and *Costellow v Somerset County Council* ([1993] 1 WLR 256).

Those authorities demonstrated that the court should not adopt a mechanistic approach to questions of extending time. The court should not, for example, fetter itself from exercising a discretion to extend time simply because there was no explanation for the delay and in particular because there was no explanation which was acceptable as a reason for the delay. Each case depended on its own circumstances. But his Lordship would emphasise the explanation given, or the lack of it, or the frankness of it, were factors which the court was entitled to take into account in exercising its discretion, and the prejudice to the opposing party was also a factor to be placed in the scales, but was not necessarily determinative any more than any other factor.

The exercise was one of balancing all the relevant factors and where the result of not granting an extension would be draconian, the court was concerned to assess the proportionality of the resulting penalty to the applicant to his failure or failures.

In the present case, the judge had not performed the balancing exercise and the exercise of discretion was flawed. Their Lordships would refer the matter to the taxing master who could penalise proportionately and had greater powers to examine the relevant facts than their Lordships.

Lord Justice Roch agreed.

Solicitors: C. D. A. Jones & Co, South Norwood; Leon Kaye Collin & Gittens, Clapham.

Minister's power to decide validity

Regina v Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and Regions, Ex parte Bath and North East Somerset District Council

Before Mr Christopher Lockhart-Mummery, QC

[Judgment January 6]

Where a local authority had refused planning and listed building consent on the ground that a developer's application had not been made validly and the developer consequently appealed, it was within the secretary of state's jurisdiction to consider the question of the validity of the application.

Mr Christopher Lockhart-Mummery, QC, so held sitting as a deputy judge of the Queen's Bench Division, in refusing the application of *Bath and North East Somerset District Council* for a declaration as to the limits of the jurisdiction of the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and Regions to consider appeals in planning applications and listed building consent applications.

The council had received applications for planning permission and listed building consent for a building in its area from a developer but it refused to entertain the application on the ground of invalidity as it considered the plans submitted in support insufficiently detailed.

The developer appealed to the secretary of state and a planning inquiry was arranged for the hearing of the appeal. The council objected to the secretary of state hearing the appeal on the ground that the validity of the developer's applications was a question for the council alone.

Mr Meyric Lewis for the council; Miss Alice Robinson for the respondent.

HIS LORDSHIP said that it was clear that whether a valid application for the purposes of article 20(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (SI 1995 No 419) had been made was one which was not exclusively for determination by the local planning authority, but one which the inspectorate, when seised of the matter, might determine.

It was helpful to reflect on the practical good sense of that construction and effect of the provisions. The inspectorate had all the application material and could perfectly well form the view that there had been compliance.

The legislative framework provided a mechanism for the timely determination of planning applications and the related remedy of lodging appeals.

It was entirely consistent with that framework for the secretary of state to determine, in a proper case, and contrary to the views of the applicant, that a valid application had been made which might now be pursued on appeal.

Solicitors: Sharpe Pritchard; Treasury Solicitor.

Non-military use of land does not invalidate bylaws

DPP v John
DPP v Lee

Before Lord Justice Buxton and Mr Justice Collins

[Judgment January 22]

In section 14(1) of the Military Lands Act 1892, land was "appropriated" for a military purpose if it was set aside or allocated to such a purpose, and the concept had nothing to do with the use of the land.

A secretary of state was entitled to make bylaws prohibiting intrusion on and/or obstruction of the use of land appropriated by him for a military purpose when that land was not currently being used for a military purpose. Use of land belonging to the secretary of state by another party with the secretary of state's consent did not automatically make that use a purpose of the secretary of state.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court so held in a reserved judgment when allowing an appeal by the prosecution by way of case stated from York Crown Court (Judge Crabtree and justices) which had granted appeals by Helen John and Anne Lee from their convictions by Claro Justices of various breaches of bylaws 4(2)(a) and 4(2)(b) of the RAF Menwith Hill Bylaws (SI 1996 No 105) contrary to section 17(2) of the 1892 Act, as amended by section 39(3) of and Schedule 3 to the Criminal Justice Act 1982.

Section 14 of the 1892 Act provides: "(1) Where any land belonging to a secretary of state or to a volunteer corps is for the time being appropriated by or with the consent of a secretary of state for any military purpose, a secretary of state may make bylaws for regulating the use of the land for the purposes to which it is appropriated, and for securing the public against danger arising from that use, with power to prohibit all intrusion on the land and all obstruction of the use thereof."

Mr Timothy Stead for the prosecution; Mrs Vera Baird for Ms John; Ms Lee in person; Mr Ian Burnett, QC, as amicus curiae.

LORD JUSTICE BUXTON said that the defendants had been convicted of breaching bylaws relating to the RAF Menwith Hill radio station, which was owned by the Ministry of Defence, but largely used by United States personnel.

The RAF Menwith Hill Bylaws had been made by the secretary of state and excluded members of the public from a specified area. The defendants accepted that on the facts found by the crown court they would be guilty of the offences if the bylaws were valid, but they contended that the bylaws were ultra vires.

It was accepted by all parties that the burden was on the defendants to prove that the bylaws were invalid: *Boddington v British Transport Police* ([1998] 2 WLR 639, 647A).

The vires for the bylaws came from Part II of the 1892 Act and particularly section 14(1), which empowered a secretary of state to make bylaws for certain purposes relating to land which was appropriated by the secretary of state for any military purpose.

The first point related to the meaning of "appropriated" in section 14(1).

The crown court had held that because not all of the land to which the bylaws applied had been in use for a military purpose when the bylaws were passed, the land was not appropriated for a military purpose at that time.

In his Lordship's judgment, that was a misinterpretation of section 14(1). "Appropriated", in that section, meant set aside for or allocated to a particular purpose, and had nothing to do with the use of the land in question.

Although the crown court had found that about 70 per cent of the land was being used for farming purposes when the bylaws were passed, the facts as found did not establish that the land had not been appropriated for a military purpose.

The second point related to the purposes for which bylaws could be made under section 14(1).

His Lordship's construction of the section was that it provided a secretary of state with four discrete powers: (i) to regulate the use of the land for the purposes to which it was appropriated; (ii) to secure the public against danger arising from that use; (iii) to prohibit all intrusion on the land; and (iv) to prohibit all obstruction of the use of the land.

In his Lordship's judgment, purposes (iii) and (iv) were not dependent on showing that the land was currently being used for a military purpose.

Third, the prosecution had argued that since the secretary of state permitted farmers to use the land for farming, farming was a purpose of the secretary of state, and therefore, by virtue of section 2(3) of the Defence (Transfer of Functions) Act 1964, a military purpose.

In his Lordship's judgment that was wrong. It was the use of the land that had to be a purpose of the secretary of state, and that was not achieved when he merely allowed someone else to use the land.

In his Lordship's judgment, each subparagraph of bylaw 4(2) was valid, clearly coming within the secretary of state's powers to prohibit intrusion on, and obstruction of use of the land.

The appeal would be allowed and the cases remitted to the crown court with a direction to dismiss the appeals.

Mr Justice Collins agreed.

Solicitors: Crown Prosecution Service, York; Harrison Bundey & Co, Leeds; Treasury Solicitor.

Power to make inquiries

Regina v Bradford Justices, Ex parte Sykes and Another

A clerk or justice was entitled, but not under a duty, to make inquiries beyond the information when deciding to issue a summons.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court (Lord Justice Buxton and Mr Justice Collins) so held on January 14, when refusing applications by Martin Robert Sykes and David James Shoesmith for judicial review of the decision by the clerk to Bradford Justices to issue summonses on July 10, 1998 charging them with, inter alia, conspiracy to supply a class A drug.

MR JUSTICE COLLINS said that the defendants had argued that it was the duty of the clerk to the justices to make inquiries into the background of the informations laid, and that if he had done so in this case, he would have concluded that it would be vexatious to issue the summonses.

The defendants argued that it was implicit in the words of Lord Widgery, Lord Chief Justice, in *R v West London Stipendiary Magistrate, Ex parte Klahn* ([1979] 1 WLR 933, 936) that inquiries should be made. Lord Widgery had referred to *R v Bros* ((1901) 85 LT 581), but that case had only decided that a clerk or justice was entitled to act on any material before him.

His Lordship's said a clerk or justice was entitled to make inquiries before issuing a summons, but there was no duty to do so.

Lord Justice Buxton agreed.

Proving perverting course of justice

Regina v Lalani

Before Lord Justice Brooke, Mr Justice Hooper and Judge Peter Crawford, QC

[Reasons January 22]

Where a juror was charged with an offence of doing acts tending and intended to pervert the course of public justice, it was not sufficient for the prosecution to rely solely on the fact of an improper communication between the juror and a defendant concerning the subject matter of the trial. It was necessary to prove that the juror had the requisite intention.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, so held in giving reasons for allowing an appeal on January 18 by Rozamin Lalani against her conviction in May 1998 at the Central Criminal Court on a plea of guilty following a ruling by the trial judge, Judge Fingret, of an offence of doing acts tending and intended to pervert the course of public justice in connection with a trial at Southwark Crown Court in the autumn of 1996.

Miss Jill Evans, assigned by the Registrar of Criminal Appeals, for the appellant; Mr James Pavry for the Crown.

LORD JUSTICE BROOKE, giving the reserved reasons of the court, said that the appellant had pleaded guilty after a ruling by the trial judge.

Mr Pavry told the trial judge that he accepted that he must prove both a tendency to pervert the course of justice and an intention on the part of the juror to achieve that end, but he asserted that his obligation was limited to establishing the basic intent to participate in improper communications with the defendants, regardless of motive.

That would embrace any communication touching on the subject matter of the trial.

Miss Clare Montgomery, QC, who appeared at the trial with Miss Evans submitted that communications between defendants and jurors could not in themselves amount to acts which had both a tendency to pervert the course of justice and an intention to do so.

She maintained that the Crown had to establish a specific intent by proving either some unlawful communication or one that was lawful but done with the intention of perverting the course of justice and with foresight that the consequences of the act could lead to a perversion of the course of justice.

The judge had ruled that any communication between defendants and jurors concerning the subject matter of the trial was capable of being an improper communication and therefore capable of having a tendency to, that is, a possibility of and be intended to pervert the course of justice.

After consultation with her advisers Lalani pleaded guilty on the basis that she admitted that she had discussed with one of the defendants her family circumstances, she had given two of the defendants her telephone number and had spoken with them on the telephone on the evenings following the jury's deliberations.

She accepted that she did those acts deliberately and therefore in that sense intended them. She did not, however, accept that she intended or contemplated that the juror to whom she passed information would be influenced by it or that she herself would be influenced in her deliberations or that the course of justice would be affected.

The appellant now challenged her conviction on the basis that the judge was wrong in law when he ruled that on the admitted facts the indictment had disclosed an offence.

In their Lordships' judgment, if a defendant in a criminal trial improperly passed information to a juror, who continued with her duties and did not immediately inform the jury bailiff, and, by that means, the judge, then in the ordinary way it should not be difficult for the Crown to prove that by her acts the juror intended to pervert the course of justice in permitting herself to be influenced by the information she had received in the way she performed her duties as a juror, whether she kept the information to herself or communicated it to other jurors.

Similarly, if she passed on such information to another juror, it should not be difficult to prove that she intended to influence that other juror and thereby change, or affect, the course of justice.

In the present case, the appellant resolutely declined to make any admissions at all about her state of mind. It was therefore incumbent on the Crown to call evidence to prove the requisite intention, which could not be implied on admitted facts once the appellant had put the matter so clearly in issue.

If the trial had proceeded, their Lordships had little doubt that the Crown would not have had much difficulty in proving that she had the requisite intention, but that was a different matter.

This was in many ways a most exceptional case but their Lordships were satisfied that the judge's ruling on mens rea was wrong and accordingly her conviction would be quashed. Since she had already served 52 days in prison of her four-month sentence, the Crown quite rightly did not ask for a retrial.

Solicitors: Crown Prosecution Service, Central Casework.

Councils should give great weight to technical advice

Regina v Tandridge District Council, Ex parte Al Fayed

Before Mr Justice Carnwath

[Judgment January 14]

On technical issues, such as radiation safety, a local authority, while not bound to follow the advice of statutory bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive and the National Radiological Protection Board, should nevertheless give great weight to their advice.

Although the council's decision-making process had been flawed, there was no realistic possibility that it would have come to a different conclusion where scientific evidence was inconclusive and the advice of the Health and Safety Executive, based on National Radiological Protection Board guidelines, was that there were no reasons on health and safety grounds why a planning application to erect a radio telephone mast should not be granted.

Mr Justice Carnwath so held sitting as an additional judge in the Queen's Bench Division and dismissing the application of Mohamed Al Fayed to quash the decision of Tandridge District Council dated July 22, 1997 to grant planning permission for the erection of a radio telephone mast by Mercury Personal Communications plc.

Mr Ian Croxford, QC and Mr Rabinder Singh for the applicant; Mr Neil King for the council; Mr David Pannick, QC and Mr Alan Griffiths for Mercury.

MR JUSTICE CARNWATH said that objections to Mercury's proposal had been submitted by the applicant, whose main concern was possible health risks.

The letter included, inter alia, an article by Dr McKinlay of the National Radiological Protection Board concerning the safety of radio station antennae. It was common ground that that letter was not sent to the Health and Safety Executive.

The council referred Mercury's proposal to the Health and Safety Executive, but did not draw attention to those particular aspects of the applicant's objections based on possible non-thermal effects. The executive replied that there were no reasons on health and safety grounds why the proposal should not be permitted.

Planning permission was granted.

Clearly on a technical issue, a local authority should give great weight to the advice of statutory bodies, and as a matter of law a local authority might take into account genuine concerns for public safety even when not wholly supported by technical evidence.

His Lordship was satisfied that the council had not regarded itself as bound by the views of the Health and Safety Executive.

However, there was substance in the applicant's complaint that his objections had not been properly considered by the council.

The objections had raised a serious planning matter which should have been investigated.

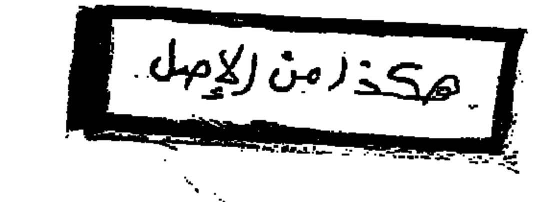
The council relied upon the advice of the executive, which had never in fact investigated the matter as it had not been put on notice to consider the applicant's specific concerns.

That was a flaw in the decision-making process. Was there a realistic possibility that the decision would have been different if it had been handled correctly?

Here the applicant's case failed. The overall effect of the technical material was clear. The effect of radio telecommunications on health, particularly the distinction between thermal effects and non-thermal effects, appeared in radiological protection board material which had been before the executive.

The application for judicial review would therefore be dismissed.

Solicitors: Halsey Meyer Higgins; Mrs Kathleen Wiggins, Oxted; Freshfields.



RACING

Starting price reporter cleared of malpractice

By Richard Evans, racing correspondent

NEAL WILKINS, the Press Association employee arrested last July on suspicion of returning false starting prices at race meetings, has been eliminated from police enquiries and will face no charges.

He was informed of the decision by the Metropolitan Police yesterday and immediately intended to take legal action against those responsible for besmirching his reputation. Civil proceedings are likely to be instituted against individuals in the Jockey Club and the Press Association.

"Only someone who has been through this kind of nightmare can imagine what it is like — absolutely desperate," he said yesterday. "I have suffered sleepless nights, nervous rashes and have been on medication. My doctor said three weeks ago that he was amazed I was still alive, given *what I have been through.*

"My only 'crime' was to dress well and smoke cigars. I should never have been put in *this situation in the first place* and those people who put me there have got to pay for it."

Wilkins, 50, has been a starting price reporter for 25 years, which involves monitoring the movements in the betting ring at Britain's 59 racecourses and determining the starting price for every runner — which are then beamed into the nation's 8,000 betting shops.

His arrest by the Metropolitan Police's clubs and vice squad followed information passed on by the PA, the national news agency, and was separate from the investigation into horse doping and race fixing, which has led to 15 arrests.

In a statement, Wilkins's lawyers said that the police admitted its investigation "has not given rise to any fact or matter which could sustain *further investigation, let alone* a prosecution."

"The allegations against Mr Wilkins were exceedingly seri*ous, both personally and pro*fessionally. He was arrested on suspicion of corruption, returning false starting prices at race meetings. He has been a SP reporter for nearly 26 years and the allegations went to the very heart of his professional standing within the racing industry and by themselves were a slur on his previously untarnished character.

"The allegations have resulted in him being suspended for six months from his employment and have caused him an immense amount of personal anxiety, stress and worry.

"While Mr Wilkins is relieved and satisfied at the events of today, he is also disappointed with the conduct of certain individuals and bodies who have both caused this spurious investigation to be undertaken in the first place and *who have, during the investi*gation, acted in a manner detrimental to Mr Wilkins's and racing's good name."

After his arrest, exactly six months before yesterday's announcement, Wilkins insisted the police action was driven by others within the racing industry in an attempt to discredit him for ulterior motives — and he pledged to sue those responsible.

"Nothing has happened over the course of the last six months so as to deter Mr Wilkins from carrying out that statement made at the time of his arrest," the lawyers' state*ment added.*

Wither Or Which back

HAVING taken a long and winding road after the 1996 Cheltenham Festival, Wither Or Which finally returns to the racecourse in a maiden hurdle at Gowran Park today (Chris McGrath writes).

Willie Mullins rode Wither Or Which himself in the Festival Bumper, before saddling Florida Pearl and Alexander Banquet to plunder the next *two runnings. Mullins said:* "Wither Or Which had a problem with a tendon and then last year with his back, but he appears in good form now. I've never ridden a horse with an engine like it."

If all goes well, Wither Or Which heads for the Citroen Supreme Novices' Hurdle at this year's Festival, while Alexander Banquet steps up in trip for the Royal & SunAlliance Novices' Hurdle.

JULIAN HERBERT — SPORT

Majadou is soon at the head of affairs as he provides Pipe and McCoy with their hundredth winner of the season at Lingfield yesterday

Champion team reaches milestone

By Chris McGrath

THIS time, perhaps the milestone was rather less significant than the horse that took them past. In sharing the hundredth winner of their respective seasons at Lingfield yesterday, Tony McCoy and Martin Pipe confirmed their pre-eminence among jump jockeys and trainers.

If it is not quite so overwhelming as has sometimes been the case, both will recognise that Majadou — who routed his sole rival, Kingsfold Pet, for the Dave Freeman Memorial Novices' Chase — can contribute to their success in terms of quality as well as quantity.

Another of Pipe's French imports, Majadou confirmed the striking im*pression of his British debut at Cheltenham on New Year's Day, when he had* beaten a good subsequent winner in Kadou Nonantais. He will return there for the Festival in March after jumping safely in very taxing conditions yesterday.

McCoy said of his winner: "He did it well, as a two-horse race is never easy. We got round safely but, like a lot of French horses, he does tend to jump to the left." The season's leading jockey added: "He's in a lot of races at the Festival, but I'm sure the trainer will make the right choice."

Pipe's decision to drop Majadou to two miles at Lingfield makes the Guinness Arkle Trophy an especially feasible target. McCoy has been unable to match the record-breaking pace he set *last season, when he reached his century on November 5. Referring to a series* of whip suspensions, he said: "I've taken much longer but it seems I've had more days off than winners."

He made up further lost time in the next two races, completing a treble of odds-on winners through Dark Stranger, for Pipe in the Play Golf at Lingfield Novices' Chase, and Kates Charm, who landed the mares' novice hurdle for Robert Alner. Pipe has now reached a hundred in 13 consecutive seasons.

Tim Forster, trainer of Well To Do, Ben Nevis and Last Suspect, and Dick Saunders, rider of Grittar, were yesterday named among five members of the Jockey Club's new Grand National entry review panel.

After the second forfeit stage in *March, the panel can recommend void*ing the entry of any horse considered unsuitably equipped for the perils of the Martell race. Chris Collins, its chairman, said that the panel would "ensure that no decisions are taken lightly or without a full understanding of what is required of a horse at Aintree". Other safety precautions being introduced at Aintree include a pre-race veto after veterinary inspection.

The race itself closed yesterday, with 103 entries including the last three winners in Earth Summit, Lord Gyllene and Rough Quest. Double Thriller, who beat Teeton Mill in a hunter chase at Cheltenham last spring, demonstrates his credentials on his first start for the in-form Paul Nicholls at Wincanton today.

WINCANTON

THUNDERER

1.40 Fayez
2.10 Andsuephi
2.40 Marigliano
3.10 Lancastrian Jet
3.40 Boro Hill
4.10 Isis Dawn

Timekeeper's top rating: 2.40 KRABLOONIK.

GOING: SOFT (GOOD TO SOFT IN PLACES) SIS

1.40 ELITE RACING CLUB JUVENILE NOVICES CLAIMING HURDLE
(4-Y-O: £1,842: 2m) (7 runners)

1 0 FAYEZ 40 (A Eran) K McAuliffe 11-12 ... A P McCoy 14
2 150005 ALLEGIANCE 27 (B,G) (P Wegmann) P Wegmann 11-4 ... D Matthews 39
3 343600 ZURYAF 19 (B) (Stanton Seven) Mrs C Hicks 11-2 ... M Keighley (7)
4 P02 BALLYKISSANN 63 (P De Weck) D French Davis 11-0 ... C Llewellyn —
5 2 KPOLO 14F (Miss J Reeves) B Johnson 11-0 ... D Gallagher 59
6 WINNING SAINT 62F (M Keogh) M Tompkins 10-10 ... A Maguire —
7 NATALIE'S PET 135F (Mrs R Gulding) M Sheppard 10-1 ... R Thornton —

BETTING: 13-8 Kpolo, 3-1 Ballykissann, 4-1 Fayez, 11-2 Winning Saint, 10-1 Zuryaf, 20-1 Allegiance, 33-1 Natalie's Pet.

1998: CHILLI BOOM 10-0 A Bates (12-1) R Simpson 14 ran

Fayez 35l 7th of 19 to Bebrajan in 3yo novice hurdle at Warwick (2m, soft). Allegiance beaten a distance 5th of 10 to Norski Lad in 4yo novice hurdle at Exeter (2m 1f 110yd, heavy), previously beaten a distance 7th of 16 to Optimistic Chris in 3yo novice selling hurdle at Uttoxeter (2m, heavy). Zuryaf 67l 8th of 13 to Flush in 4yo novice hurdle at Warwick (2m, heavy); previously 64l 8th of 11 to Dangerous Precedent in 4yo novice hurdle at Cheltenham (2m 1f, good to soft). Ballykissann 12l 2nd of 11 to The Robe in 3yo novice selling hurdle at Taunton (2m 1f, good); previously 71l 10th of 18 to Mothers Help in 3yo novice hurdle at Windsor (2m, good to soft). Kpolo 16l 3rd of 10 to Sadler's Secret in 3yo maiden hurdle at Plumpton (2m 1f, heavy). Winning Saint only sign of ability on Flat when second in 1m6f maiden at Lingfield last July. Natalie's Pet poor maiden on Flat, sold 850gns in October.

FAYEZ has good claims here after running well in a much stronger event on his hurdles bow

2.10 MAURICE LISTER NOVICES CHASE
(£3,831: 2m 5f) (7 runners)

1 311-34 ALBERMARLE 27 (F,G,S) (R Ogden) H Daly 8-11-4 ... A P McCoy 109
2 0-11 DOUBLE TEMPO 33 (G,S) (Bat On Partnership) C Egerton 8-11-4 ... J Osborne
3 34-321 HOLDIMCLOSE 27 (F,S) (Mrs C Loze) R Frost 9-11-4 ... J Frost 110
4 1140P- ANDSUEPHI 300 (G,S) (Mrs J Cohen) S Sherwood 7-10-12 ... G Bradley —
5 -F4F34 DUNNICKS VIEW 14 (F Tucker) F Tucker 10-10-12 ... S Burrough 94
6 /142P/ ROYAL RAVEN 714 (G) (A Weller) J Gilford 8-10-12 ... L Aspell —
7 5-F WAYNFLETE 64 (Earl of Aran) N Henderson 8-10-12 ... M A Fitzgerald —

BETTING: 9-4 Holdimclose, 5-2 Double Tempo, 5-1 Andsuephi, 6-1 Waynflete, 7-1 Albermarle, 10-1 Royal Raven, 25-1 Dunnicks View.

1998: BENGERS MOOR 7-10-12 T J Murphy (1-3 fav) P Nicholls 8 ran

Double Tempo beat Specialize 8l in 10-runner novice chase at Huntingdon (2m 4f 110yd, soft), previously beat Galapiat Du Mesnil 2½l in 15-runner novice hurdle at Windsor (2m 4f, good). Holdimclose beat Divine Chance 20l in 10-runner novice chase at Exeter (2m 7f 110yd, heavy) with Albermarle (8lb better off) 37l 4th. Andsuephi pulled up in novice hurdle grade 1 at Aintree (3m 110yd, soft), previously 33l 9th of 18 to French Holly in novice hurdle grade 1 at Cheltenham (2m 5f, good). Dunnicks View 11l 4th of 14 to The Cockertoo in novice handicap chase at Wincanton (2m 5f, soft); previously 11l 3rd of 14 to Rolfcall in novice handicap chase at Taunton (2m 3f, good to soft). Royal Raven pulled up in novice handicap hurdle at Sandown (2m 6f, good to soft); previously 10l 2nd of 10 to Fiddling The Facts in novice hurdle at Folkestone (2m 6f 110yd, good to soft). Waynflete fell in novice chase at Chepstow (2m 110yd, good), previously 29l 5th of 13 to Gaitax in novice hurdle at Chepstow (2m 110yd, good to soft).

HOLDIMCLOSE confirmed the promise of his chase bow when trotting up latest and should be followed

2.40 TOTE HURDLE (SHOWCASE HANDICAP)
(£5,550: 2m) (7 runners)

1 1213- PETITE RISK 301 (D,G,S) (A Lomax) M Pipe 5-11-10 ... A P McCoy 109
2 /14-61 DUKE'S MOUNT 21 (D,F,S) (Mrs C Smith) D Nicholson 9-11-8 ... A Maguire 52
3 43-121 NEAT FEAT 56 (CD,F,G,S) (Food Brokers Ltd) D Elsworth 8-11-4 ... P Holley 112
4 -F2113 MARIGLIANO 21 (BF,D,S) (T Pryke) K Morgan 6-10-3 ... A S Smith 115
5 0-3321 KRABLOONIK 14 (CD,S) (Mrs D Potter) J Mullins 5-10-2 ... J Goldstein (5)
6 00-032 KINO'S CROSS 19 (CD,G,S) (N Harvey) A J Wilson 10-10-0 ... Mr R Forristal (5) 113
7 4-5524 PEVERIL PENDRAGON 68 (D,S) (Mrs E Haycock) G Balding 5-10-0 ... S Fox 108

Long handicap: Kino's Cross 9-11, Peveril Pendragon 9-11.

BETTING: 11-4 Neat Feat, 3-1 Duke's Mount, 4-1 Marigliano, 9-2 Petite Risk, 13-2 Krabloonik, 14-1 Kino's Cross, 16-1 Peveril Pendragon.

1998: DINES 6-10-10 T J Murphy (2-1 fav) P Nicholls 14 ran

Petite Risk 9l 3rd of 10 to Fataliste in novice hurdle grade 2 at Aintree (2m 110yd, soft); previously beat The Reverdullis 13l in 8-runner 4yo novice hurdle at Ludlow (2m, good to soft). Duke's Mount beat Warrin neck in 8-runner handicap hurdle at Market Rasen (2m 1f 110yd, heavy) with Marigliano (3lb better off) 1¼l 3rd. Neat Feat beat Nazir 6l in 9-runner handicap hurdle at Wincanton (2m, good to soft); previously 4l 2nd of 6 to Real Estate in handicap hurdle at Ascot (2m 110yd, good to soft). Krabloonik beat Alka International 7l in 10-runner handicap hurdle at Wincanton (2m, soft); previously 9l 2nd of 9 to Pietro Bembo in novice handicap hurdle at Wincanton (2m, heavy). Kino's Cross 1¼l 2nd of 6 to Coulthard in handicap hurdle at Warwick (2m, heavy); previously 19l 3rd of 12 to Shadoan in handicap hurdle at Hereford (2m 3f 110yd, good). Peveril Pendragon 21l 4th of 5 to Papo Kharisma in handicap hurdle at Exeter (2m 3f, good to soft); previously 6l 2nd of 5 to Glowing Path in handicap hurdle at Exeter (2m 1f, soft).

KRABLOONIK ran out an easy winner over track and trip latest and can defy a 10lb rise in the weights

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Rnrs	%	JOCKEYS	Wins	Rnrs	%
P Nicholls	34	125	27.2	J Osborne	11	47	23.4
M Pipe	36	146	24.7	A McCoy	23	109	21.1
D Nicholson	8	40	20.0	G Bradley	6	33	18.2
N Henderson	7	40	17.5	A Maguire	5	41	12.2
J Gifford	10	59	16.9	C Llewellyn	4	33	12.1
D Elsworth	5	31	16.1	M Fitzgerald	7	59	11.9
Mrs S Williams	4	25	16.0	P Holley	8	80	10.0

3.10 RACING CHANNEL HANDICAP CHASE
(£7,003: 3m 1f 110yd) (5 runners)

1 4/212- DOUBLE THRILLER 244 (BF,F,G,S) (R Wilkins) P Nicholls 9-11-10 ... J Tizzard 124
2 /UF11- PARAHANDY 290 (CD,G,S) (G Heard) J Mullins 9-11-5 ... R Guest 129
3 11-412 LANCASTRIAN JET 31 (BF,D,F,G,S) (Hon Mrs A Heber-Percy) H Daly 8-10-13 ... S Wynne
4 122P-1 MALWOOD CASTLE 14 (CD,F,G,S) (Mrs U Wainwright) R Alner 9-10-11 ... R Widger (5) 137
5 -P0101 SHARP COMMAND 57 (D,F,G,S) (A Holland & Mrs P Jones) P Eccles 6-10-7 ... A Maguire 131

BETTING: 5-4 Double Thriller, 7-2 Malwood Castle, 9-2 Lancastrian Jet, 6-1 Sharp Command, 7-1 Parahandy.

1998: ALLER MOOR 7-10-0 P Holley (7-2) R Alner 7 ran

Double Thriller ¾l 2nd of 11 to Lord Dolton in novice hunter chase at Stratford (3m 4f, good to firm); previously beat Teeton Mill 12l in 9-runner hunter chase at Cheltenham (3m 2f 110yd, good to soft). Parahandy beat Egypt Cove neck in 8-runner novice chase at Wincanton (3m 1f 110yd, soft); previously beat Miss Diskin 15l in 7-runner handicap chase at Fontwell (3m 2f 110yd, good). Lancastrian Jet 28l 2nd of 4 to Dr Leunt in handicap chase at Kempton (3m, soft); previously beat Master Chief 2l in 5-runner handicap chase at Towcester (3m 1f, soft). Malwood Castle beat Saras Delight 3½l in 7-runner handicap chase at Wincanton (3m 1f 110yd, soft). Sharp Command beat Arctic Fox neck in 22-runner handicap chase at Catterick (3m 1f 110yd, good to firm), previously 38l 13th of 22 to Papo Kharisma in handicap hurdle at Cheltenham (2m 5f, good)

DOUBLE THRILLER claimed the scalp of Teeton Mill last April and could prove well treated

3.40 PAT RUTHVEN AND GUY NIXON MEMORIAL VASE (HANDICAP CHASE)
(Amateur: £3,454: 3m 1f 110yd) (7 runners)

1 5544-P AROUND THE GALE 28 (BF,S) (T Whitley) D Gandolfo 8-12-0 ... C Bonner (3) 83
2 U31-64 WELL TIMED 72 (CD,G,S) (Mrs G Roberts) R Frost 9-11-13 ... A Holdsworth
3 /P11/F BRAVE BUCCANEER 42 (D,G,S) (R Fowler) R E Fowler 12-11-4 ... A Charles-Jones —
4 F-P2P1 DANCETILLYOUDROP 17 (S) (D Millard) P Nicholls 8-10-13 ... S Stronge (7) 117
5 5UF/PU ROCKY PARK 27 (S) (Mr & Mrs T Geake) G Balding 13-10-4 ... P Flynn (7) —
6 3P-424 BORO HILL 20 (G) (R Allsop) A Hobbs 10-10-0 ... R Forristal 102
7 603322 DIVINE CHANCE 27 (G,S) (M Churches) M Churches 11-10-0 ... J Young (7) 111

Long handicap: Boro Hill 9-9, Divine Chance 8-7.

BETTING: 9-4 Dancetillyoudrop, 4-1 Around The Gale, 9-2 Well Timed, 5-1 Boro Hill, 8-1 Rocky Park, Divine Chance, 12-1 Brave Buccaneer.

1998: WELL TIMED 8-11-7 A Holdsworth (9-2) R Frost 11 ran

Around The Gale pulled up in handicap chase at Warwick (2m 4f 110yd, good to soft), previously 4½l 4th of 9 to Martell Boy in handicap chase at Stratford (3m, good). Well Timed 34l 4th of 8 to Mister Blake in handicap chase at Newton Abbot (3m 2f 110yd, good to soft); previously beaten a distance 6th of 7 to Calling Wild in novice hurdle at Chepstow (3m, good to soft). Brave Buccaneer fell in handicap chase at Towcester (3m 1f, soft); previously beat Camelot Knight 1½l in 10-runner handicap chase at Towcester (3m 1f, good to soft). Dancetillyoudrop beat Nazzaro a distance in 6-runner handicap chase at Fontwell (3m 2f 110yd, soft). Boro Hill 9¾l 4th of 11 to Noisy Miner in handicap chase at Ludlow (3m, good to soft); previously ¼l 2nd of 13 to Bold Statement in handicap chase at Taunton (3m, good to soft). Divine Chance 20l 2nd of 10 to Holdimclose in novice chase at Exeter (2m 7f 110yd, heavy), previously 7l 2nd of 17 to Spirit Level in amateur sell. handicap hurdle at Exeter (2m 7f, soft).

Much more was expected of AROUND THE GALE first time out but he merits another chance in this grade

4.10 POTTERS HANDICAP HURDLE (TOTE TRIFECTA RACE)
(£2,878: 2m 6f) (13 runners)

1 151P-3 BELMORE ROCK 28 (B,D,F,G,S) (Mrs A Hartnett) M Pipe 12-12-0 ... A P McCoy 110
2 1P3/4- KINGS WITNESS 446 (S) (J Hordle) P Nicholls 6-11-10 ... Mr S Stronge (7) —
3 115-50 SEIZE THE DAY 15 (CD,G,S) (Mrs N Coombe) M Coombe 11-11-2 ... Miss M Coombe 111
4 2-P45P SHEPHERDS REST 19 (S) (Odd Dozen) S Mellor 7-10-12 ... C Webb 82
5 35-143 PALAEMON 117 (G) (Miss B Swire) G Balding 5-10-8 ... F Keniry (7) 84
6 12-620 SUNRISE SPECIAL 21 (S) (F Landigan) P Rodford 6-10-6 ... S Burrough 109
7 36422P KEEP ME IN MIND 28 (C,F,G,S) (P Tory) N Mitchell 10-10-6 ... Sophie Mitchell 105
8 2033-P ISIS DAWN 236 (D,G) (Major B Gatell) P Hobbs 7-10-4 ... R Widger (5)
9 335-43 MISSED CALL 17 (Pamela, Lady Nelson of Stafford) M Tompkins 7-10-3 ... A Maguire 106
10 2501U2 PONTEVEDRA 22 (F,G) (D & M Cased Hole) K Morgan 6-10-1 ... A S Smith 112
11 0P2/2- SOUTHERNHAY BOY 462 (S) (D Coard) Mrs S Williams 8-10-0 ... C Llewellyn —
12 P-4531 TOP SKIPPER 30 (G,S) (R Dunn) B Millman 7-10-0 ... R Thornton 102
13 000P40 WOODHOUSE BAY 21 (B) (Sir Peter Miller) C Morlock 6-10-0 ... Mr R Forristal (5) 50

Long handicap: Top Skipper 9-12, Woodhouse Bay 8-7.

BETTING: 5-1 Belmore Rock, 7-1 Kings Witness, Pontevedra, Top Skipper, 8-1 Palaemon, Sunrise Special, Missed Call, 10-1 others.

1998: WALTER'S DESTINY 6-10-3 G Upton (20-1) C Mitchell 21 ran

Belmore Rock 5l 3rd of 8 to Just Nip in handicap hurdle at Fontwell (2m 6f 110yd, heavy). Kings Witness 13l 4th of 7 to Potter's Gale in handicap hurdle at Chepstow (2m 110yd, good to soft); previously 9½l 3rd of 6 to Quality in 4yo novice hurdle at Uttoxeter (2m, good). Seize The Day 27l 9th of 17 to Atavistic in handicap hurdle at Kempton (3m 110yd, heavy), previously beaten a distance 5th of 6 to Three Farthings in handicap hurdle at Wincanton (2m 6f, heavy). Shepherds Rest pulled up in handicap hurdle at Fontwell (2m 2f 110yd, heavy); previously 13l 5th of 12 to Kilbride Lad in handicap hurdle at Warwick (2m 3f, soft). Palaemon 10l 3rd of 6 to Toski in novice handicap hurdle at Chepstow (2m 4f 110yd, good); previously 24l 4th of 8 to Abzuard in novice hurdle at Exeter (2m 6f, good). Sunrise Special 23l last of 8 to Duke's Mount in handicap hurdle at Market Rasen (2m 1f 110yd, heavy), previously 2½l 2nd of 9 to Whitebonnet in handicap hurdle at Exeter (2m 3f 110yd, heavy). Keep Me In Mind pulled up in handicap hurdle at Fontwell (2m 2f 110yd, heavy); previously 4l 2nd of 6 to Milamount in handicap hurdle at Plumpton (3m 4f, good to soft). Isis Dawn pulled up in handicap hurdle at Newton Abbot (2m 6f, good); previously 4l 3rd of 8 to Marine Society in handicap hurdle at Newton Abbot (2m 6f, good to firm). Missed Call beaten a distance 3rd of 10 to Sorrento Day in maiden hurdle at Fakenham (2m 7f 110yd, soft), previously 14l 4th of 13 to Yorkshire Edition in novice hurdle at Wincanton (2m 6f, good to soft). Pontevedra 4l 2nd of 11 to Jessolle in mares handicap hurdle at Musselburgh (2m 4f, good). Southernhay Boy 8l 2nd of 14 to Polo Ridge in novice hurdle at Wincanton (2m 6f, good); previously 15l 2nd of 8 to Kimington in novice hurdle at Wincanton (2m 6f, firm). Top Skipper beat Pablo's Jet 15l in 11-runner selling handicap hurdle at Taunton (3m 110yd, good to soft), previously 14l 3rd of 17 to Spirit Level in amateur sell. handicap hurdle at Exeter (2m 7f, soft).

PALAEMON goes well fresh and is one to consider on his return from a four-month absence

BLINKERED FIRST TIME

Huntingdon: 1.20 Just A Roadie. 1.50 Jet Boys. 2.20 Noble Athlete. 3.20 Fountain Bank. **Lingfield Park:** 1.30 Melt The Clouds. 2.30 Woolly Winsome. 3.00 Teofilio. 4.00 Sarum. **Wincanton:** 4.10 Belmore Rock.

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Lingfield Park

Going: heavy

1.30 (2m 7f hdle) 1, **ARDENT OLIVER** (Mr H Hankey, 11-2); 2, **Jim Jam Joey** (Mr P Hacking, 10-3 fav); 3, **Smokey Robot** (Mr R P Varian, 33-1). ALSO RAN: 7-2 A-El-Cee, 9-2 Bricanmore, 5 Mud In Your Ear, 10 Selmeston, 12 Tie Break, 14 Edge Ahead (4th), Exact (5th), 33 Daisy River. 11 ran. 3½l, 21l, 4l, ½l. D Nicholson at Temple Guiting. Tote: £8.30; £2.40, £1.20, £32.00. DF: £12.60. CSF: £25.38.

2.00 (2m ch) 1, **MAJADOU** (A P McCoy, 2-13 fav); 2, **Kingsfold Pet** (C Llewellyn, 5-1). 2 ran. Dist. M Pipe at Wellington. Tote: £1.10

2.30 (2m 4f 110yd ch) 1, **DARK STRANGER** (A P McCoy, 2-5 fav); 2, **Melling** (C Maude, 9-4); 3, **Rice Approach** (P Holley, 25-1). 3 ran. 18l, 3½l. M Pipe at Wellington. Tote: £1.30. DF: £1.10. CSF: £1.52.

3.00 (2m 3f 110yd hdle) 1, **KATES CHARM** (A P McCoy, 4-9 fav; Thunderer's nap); 2, **Bora Bora** (C Llewellyn, 6-2); 3, **Good Thyne Girl** (S Fox, 40-1). ALSO RAN: 13-2 Kellys Conquest, 66 Princess Rosheen, 100 Lilly The Filly. 6 ran. NR: Mystockings. 17l, dist. R Alner at Blandford Forum. Tote: £1.50; £1.10, £1.30. DF: £1.40. CSF: £1.96.

3.30 (3m ch) 1, **GRIZZLY BEAR** (Mr S Stronge, 4-1 jt-fav); 2, **Kingdom of Shades** (N Williamson, 5-1); 3, **Callevа Star** (R Widger, 13-2). ALSO RAN: 4-1 jt-fav Total Joy (fell), 15-2 Simpson, 8 Quiet Moments, 10 Caridwen (5th), High Mood (4th), 20 Full of Bounce (6th). 9 ran. 28l, 13l, 5l, ¾l, 17l. R Stronge at Newbury. Tote: £3.20; £1.20, £2.20, £2.40. Tote Trifecta: £139.30. DF: £6.50. CSF: £22.71. Tricast: £115.72.

4.00 (2m 110yd flat) 1, **JOHNSTON'S ART** (B Powell, 7-1); 2, **Bowl of Gold** (N Williamson, evens fav); 3, **Mydante** (A Price, 33-1). ALSO RAN: 9-4 Kentford Busy B (4th), 7 Generous Deal (6th), 14 Stanbrook Lass, 33 Gigi, Mysie (5th), 50 Bag of Toys. 9 ran. 15l, 1¾l, 20l, 17l. R Buckler at Bridport. Tote: £8.10; £2.40, £1.10, £4.40. DF: £12.80. CSF: £13.87.

Placepot: £4.80. **Quadpot:** £2.20.

Wolverhampton

Going: standard

1.40 (5f) 1, **MARY JANE** (Iona Wands, 9-1); 2, **Opening Range** (N Carlisle, 12-1); 3, **Mallesala** (C Teague, 6-1). ALSO RAN: 13-8 fav Baptismal Rock (4th), 7-2 Another Nightmare, 6 Sweet Magic, 12 Hurgill Lady (6th), 20 Featherstone Lane (5th), 25 Boffy. 9 ran. 1¼l, nk, 2½l, ½l, 1l. J Berry at Cockerham. Tote: £9.50; £2.10, £2.70, £1.50. DF: £41.90. CSF: £106.39. Tricast: £651.30.

2.10 (5f) 1, **SOTONIAN** (S Righton, 5-2); 2, **Silk Cottage** (H Bastiman, 7-1); 3, **Tinker's Surprise** (J Edmunds, 9-4 fav). ALSO RAN: 6-1 Bowcliffe Grange (6th), Diapol Clan, 9 Selkirk Rose (4th), 33 Nifty Norman (5th), 40 Makahu Don. 8 ran. 1¼l, ½l, sh hd, 3l, 3l. P Felgate at Lisburn. Tote: £3.30; £1.10, £2.80, £1.80. DF: £8.90. CSF: £18.89. Tricast: £40.57.

2.40 (7f) 1, **C-HARRY** (R Cochrane, 4-1); 2, **Fayrn** (J Quinn, 4-1); 3, **Elite Hope** (Dean McKeown, 9-2). ALSO RAN: 7-2 fav Killarney Jazz (4th), 6 Village Native (5th), 8 Paricles, 20 Sala Sharp Jo, 25 Amber Regent (6th), 50 Athenian Heights, Lochon, Red Risk, Village Pub. 12 ran. Sh hd, 2l, 1½l, 8l, 3½l. R Hollinshead at Upper Longdon. Tote: £4.20; £2.00, £1.10, £1.80. DF: £4.90. CSF: £18.12.

3.10 (5f) 1, **DRYAD** (T G McLaughlin, 7-1); 2, **Love Opera** (P Fessey, 12-1); 3, **Bluewater Bay** (J Tate, 11-2). ALSO RAN: 2-1 fav Walting Knight (4th), 5 Danakil (5th), French Spice (6th), 8 Locomotion, 12 Prince of Abaco, 25 Cadmus, Imperial Envoy, Mucho Color, 33 Breezy Melody, Pams Princess. 13 ran. 1l, hd, nk, 2½l, 4l. N Littmoden at Wolverhampton. Tote: £11.10; £3.30, £3.10, £3.00. DF: £97.50. CSF: £90.21.

3.40 (1m 100yd) 1, **BARON DE PICHON** (J Quinn, 11-10 fav); 2, **Wiedshill** (R Winston, 7-1); 3, **Bustling Rio** (L Charnock, 33-1). ALSO RAN: 7-4 Love Diamonds (4th), 6 West U There (5th), 20 Rendita (6th). 6 ran. 1¼l, 6l, 4l, 5l, 3½l. N Littmoden at Wolverhampton. Tote: £2.20; £1.60, £2.30. DF: £11.60. CSF: £9.66.

4.10 (1m 6f 166yd) 1, **EVEZIO RUFO** (R Thomas, 6-1); 2, **Infamous** (R Havlin, 6-1); 3, **Hillzah** (Dean McKeown, 6-1). ALSO RAN: 13-8 fav Monaco Gold (4th), 7 Bonne Ville (6th), 16 Marsayas, 20 Albemine (5th), 50 Dalmo, King of Babylon, 66 Dawn Treader, Pearl Anniversary. 11 ran. 1½l, nk, 7l, 3½l, ¾l. N Littmoden at Wolverhampton. Tote: £4.20; £2.10, £2.00, £2.00. DF: £19.60. CSF: £46.42.

4.40 (1m 1f 79yd) 1, **SUALTACH** (R Cochrane, 7-1); 2, **Tallulah Belle** (T G McLaughlin, 5-1); 3, **China Castle** (P Goode, 6-4 fav). ALSO RAN: 5-1 Green Bopper (5th), 9 Tropical Beach, 10 Godmersham Park (4th), 11 Sea Ya Maite (6th), 12 Anita At Dawn, 33 Smart Boy. 9 ran. 1¾l, 2½l, hd, nk, nk. R Hollinshead at Upper Longdon. Tote: £6.30; £1.90, £1.50, £1.70. DF: £9.20. CSF: £41.05. Tricast: £75.05.

Placepot: £106.70. **Quadpot:** £20.60.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

HUNTINGDON: TRAINERS: M Pitman, 6 winners from 15 runners, 40.0%; Mrs M Reveley, 12 from 33, 36.4%; N Henderson, 11 from 36, 30.6%; J Spearing, 5 from 22, 22.7%; G Hubbard, 13 from 59, 22.0%.

JOCKEYS: L Corcoran, 4 winners from 6 rides, 66.7%; G Lee, 4 from 17, 23.5%; L Cummins, 3 from 13, 23.1%; P Niven, 3 from 16, 18.8%; J McCarthy, 12 from 68, 17.6%; Michael Brennan, 5 from 32, 15.6%.

LINGFIELD PARK: TRAINERS: J Berry, 26 winners from 131 runners, 19.8%; P Haslam, 23 from 116, 19.8%; R Armstrong, 14 from 75, 18.7%; V Soane, 8 from 43, 18.6%; D Chapman, 19 from 105, 18.1%; B Hanbury, 9 from 50, 18%.

JOCKEYS: D McKeown, 27 winners from 153 rides, 17.6%; R Cochrane, 53 from 334, 15.9%; S Whitworth, 54 from 383, 14.1%; D Gibson, 6 from 56, 10.7%.

THUNDERER

1.20 Misty Class. 1.50 Jet Boys. 2.20 Round Robin. 2.50 River Wye. 3.20 TONOCO (nap). 3.50 Buckland Lad. 4.20 Roman Lord.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT (SOFT IN PLACES) SIS

1.20 SAPLEY CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE
(£2,129: 2m 5f 110yd) (20 runners)

1 2131 CATHEDRAL BELLE 33 (D,S) Mrs M Reveley 5-12-0 ... G Lee (3) 81
2 -606 CLAIRESWAN 8 (F,G,S) C Dwyer 7-11-5 ... M H Naughton 55
3 10-P CINNAMON STICK 96 (G) J Jefferson 6-11-4 ... T Siddall (3) 95
4 -325 BESSIE BROWNE 8 (CD,G) G Hubbard 7-11-3 ... C Hoocar (10) 101
5 FP60 MONKS SOHAM 40 (D,G,S) G Hubbard 11-11-2 ... L Barber (10) 41
6 1432 MISTY CLASS 14 (D,S) Mrs S Smith 7-11-1 ... S Durack 99
7 30-0 EHTEFAAL 27 (D,F,G) J King 8-10-13 ... L Cummins —
8 /1-P SKANE RIVER 14 (G) Mrs S Smith 8-10-10 ... D Elsworth (10) —
9 4155 BAD BERTRICH 117 (F,G) Graeme Roe 8-10-8 ... S Graham (7) 82
10 -533 TABRIZ 22 (G) Mrs P Aikin 8-10-7 ... R McGrath 95
11 -36P AMOTHEBAMBO 17 R Baker 8-10-6 ... G Shenkin 58
12 4451 APACHE PARK 56 (G,S) A Streeter 6-10-5 ... X Aizpuru 95
13 0022 ZAHAALIE 21 (G) J Pickering 7-10-0 ... H Oliver
14 0-46 GHOSTLY APPARITION 17 J Upson 6-10-0 ... G Supple 88
15 046- YER 'UMBLE 404 J K Cresswell 8-10-0 ... L Corcoran (4) —
16 104U WHISPERING COURT 8 (S) A Turnell 9-10-0 ... M Griffiths 91
17 564- WHERE'S MIRANDA 278 G McCourt 7-10-0 ... R Studholme (3) 72
18 25/0 MRS ROBINSON 21 J Mackie 8-10-0 ... E Husband (3) 29
19 0-6P JUST A ROADIE 20 (B) G Thorner 6-10-0 ... Clare Thorner (10) 42
20 0-P4 NIGHT-THYNE 28 M J Roberts 7-10-0 ... G Rafter (4) 76

7-2 Zahaalie, 5-1 Cathedral Belle, 13-2 Misty Class, 7-1 Tabriz, 8-1 Apache Park, 10-1 Bessie Browne, 16-1 Whispering Court, 20-1 others.

1.50 HINCHINGBROOKE NOVICES CHASE
(£4,107: 3m) (7)

1 P022 BRACKENHEATH 22 (B,D,F,G,S) D Grissell 8-10-10 ... B Fenton 113
2 3-03 BRIGHT FLAME 17 (S) Miss S Edwards 7-10-10 ... O Burrows (5) 29
3 P400 HI HEDLEY 15 (D,F,G) G Hubbard 9-10-10 ... Michael Brennan —
4 -1F3 JET BOYS 79 (V,BF,D,F,G,S) Mrs J Pitman 9-10-10 ... B Harding —
5 FU2F KING PIN 14 (F,G,S) P Beaumont 7-10-10 ... R Supple 101
6 4252 SURSUM CORDA 20 (S) H Daly 8-10-10 ... R Johnson
7 P-6P TUDOR FALCON 7 (S) P Bradley 6-10-10 ... Gary Lyons

6-4 King Pin, 7-2 Jet Boys, Sursum Corda, 11-2 Brackenheath, 14-1 Hi Hedley, 16-1 others.

2.20 YELLING NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE
(£2,612: 2m 110yd) (13)

1 1114 SELBERRY 27 (BF,G,S) E L James 5-12-0 ... S Kelly (5) 64
2 3-25 GRAND CRU 40 J Cullinan 8-11-8 ... Mr J Owen (7) 90
3 4202 STONE RIDGE 13 (BF) J Pearce 7-11-6 ... S Durack 81
4 1 OPTIMISTIC CHRIS 40 (D,S) A Streeter 4-11-3 ... T Eley 82
5 -530 NOBLE ATHLETE 40 (B) Mrs J Pitman 7-10-11 ... B Harding 80
6 5511 BARTON SCAMP 29 (D,S) D Williams 7-10-11 ... Mr N Fehily (7) 83
7 4535 CRUZ SANTA 21 M Chapman 6-10-10 ... W Worthington 81
8 0312 ROUND ROBIN 22 (B,D,S) Mrs A E Johnson 5-10-9 ... R Johnson
9 4630 SHARP MOVE 76 Miss H Knight 7-10-8 ... J Culloty 91
10 U033 SHANNON SHOON 33 Mrs S Smith 7-10-6 ... Mr J Crowley (5) 35
11 0336 PRECIOUS ISLAND 8 J Pickering 6-10-4 ... Gary Lyons 88
12 0006 THE POLYMATH 20 P Charnings 6-10-4 ... B Fenton 88
13 P-06 GREENSIDE CHAT 24 L A Dace 9-10-0 ... O Burrows (5) 40

7-2 Selberry, 4-1 Stone Ridge, 7-1 Grand Cru, 8-1 Optimistic Chris, Barton Scamp, 10-1 Noble Athlete, Cruz Santa, 14-1 others.

2.50 KITTY WARD-THOMAS NOVICES CHASE
(£3,951: 2m 110yd) (8)

1 4612 RIVER WYE 28 (D,G,S) G Vaughan 7-11-11 ... [illegible]
2 /5-3 BENVENUTO 83 (D,G) K Bailey 6-11-4 ... A McCoy 91
3 0-24 ECLIPTIC MOON 21 (D,S) C Pogson 9-11-4 ... N Bentley 82
4 -124 FERRERS 31 (D,G,S) Mrs P Sly 8-11-4 ... W Marston —
5 -2FP GINGER FOX 81 (D,G,S) Mrs J Pitman 6-11-4 ... B Harding —
6 330/ MHEANMETOO 14F A P Jones 8-11-4 ... B Clifford —
7 P36- NAMOODAJ 318 (B,G,S) D Nicholson 6-11-4 ... R Johnson —
8 0-35 SOL MUSIC 23 (S) J King 7-11-4 ... C Maude 54

9-4 River Wye, 11-4 Benvenuto, 9-2 Namoodaj, 11-2 Ginger Fox, 12-1 Ecliptic Moon, Ferrers, Sol Music, 20-1 Mheanmetoo.

3.20 EBF NH NOVICES HURDLE
(£2,762: 2m 110yd) (10)

1 1-41 TONOCO 39 (D,G,S) Mrs S Smith 6-11-10 ... S Durack
2 BACCHANAL N Henderson 5-11-8 ... J R Kavanagh
3 0-40 FOUNTAIN BANK 31 (B) J Spearing 6-11-0 ... B Fenton 61
4 /0P4 FRENCH COUNTY 41 J Jenkins 7-11-0 ... M Griffiths (5) 64
5 -080 RATHURE 21 (F) J Curtis 7-11-0 ... G McPhail (5) 35
6 P RUN WITH THE TIDE 75 A Turnell 6-11-0 ... A Dobbin —
7 0-43 STONE'S THROW 20 (BF) D Nicholson 6-11-0 ... R Johnson 91
8 TARTAN SHOT Miss H Knight 6-11-0 ... J Culloty —
9 0- CHELWORTH VI 608 J Spearing 7-10-9 ... T J Murphy —
10 1-22 DORANS GROVE 47 (BF,D,S) J King 5-10-9 ... L Cummins (3) —

6-4 Tonoco, 11-4 Stone's Throw, 5-1 Bacchanal, 7-1 Dorans Grove, 12-1 Tartan Shot, 16-1 French County, 25-1 Fountain Bank, Run With The Tide, Chelworth VI, 50-1 Rathure.

3.50 MARCH HANDICAP CHASE
(£2,906: 2m 110yd) (5)

1 4/1- NOT MY LINE 357 (D,S) W Clowes 10-11-10 ... Mr N Fehily (7)
2 -121 BUCKLAND LAD 15 (D,F,S) D Grissell 8-11-8 ... B Fenton
3 12-F HARFDECENT 10 (F,S) Mrs M Reveley 8-11-2 ... P Niven 112
4 1-21 O MY LOVE 90 (D,G,S) N Babbage 8-10-4 ... L Cummins (3) 113
5 4442 NORTHERN SADDLER 17 (CD) R Hodges 12-10-0 ... R Johnson 116

6-4 Buckland Lad, 5-2 Harfdecent, 5-1 Not My Line, 6-1 Northern Saddler, 13-2 O My Love.

4.20 HUNTINGDON MAIDEN OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT (£1,683: 2m 110yd) (21)

1 DROMDORAN P R Webber 5-11-5 ... J A McCarthy —
2 00 EMPEROR'S SON 42 J Curtis 5-11-5 ... O McPhail (5) 13
3 0- MANNEKEN PIS 271 K Bailey 5-11-5 ... E Byrne (7) 32
4 MR HARRY K Bell 5-11-5 ... J Magee —
5 0 PRINCE OF TROY 7 G Ham 5-11-5 ... G Shenkin (5) —
6 ROMAN LORD Miss H Knight 5-11-5 ... J Culloty —
7 VRAIMENT BLEU J Spearing 5-11-5 ... Mr N Fehily (7) —
8 0- ARDENT ANNIE 349 J Cullinan 5-11-0 ... Mr J Owen (7) —
9 5 DEADLY DORIS 155 N Smith 5-11-0 ... R Studholme (5)
10 4 FIR 13 D Morris 5-11-0 ... S Kelly (5) 33
11 MASSEUSE Mrs D Haine 5-11-0 ... S Durack —
12 P0- MISS NOVA 257 N Smith 5-11-0 ... M Sharratt 38
13 TOM'S DEAL M Tompkins 5-11-0 ... D Yellowlees (7) —
14 4 BOURBON STREET 21 Mrs A E Johnson 4-10-7 ... R Johnson —
15 DEVIL'S ADVOCATE M Pitman 4-10-7 ... T J Murphy —
16 2 FIFTEEN REDS 21 D Shaw 4-10-7 ... A Dobbin —
17 MISS THE POINT Mrs M Reveley 4-10-7 ... P Niven —
18 NICE BALANCE M Chapman 4-10-7 ... W Worthington —
19 SO BE IT Miss M Rowland 4-10-7 ... Gary Lyons —
20 SPIRIT OF FIRE J Jenkins 4-10-7 ... M Griffiths (5) —
21 DEVON REEF R Spicer 4-10-2 ... B Harding —

11-4 Devil's Advocate, 3-1 Miss The Point, 9-2 Fifteen Reds, 8-1 Bourbon Street, 10-1 Roman Lord, 14-1 Manneken Pis, 16-1 Fir, 20-1 others.

THUNDERER

1.30 Muhandis. 2.00 Boldly Cliff. 2.30 Woolly Winsome. 3.00 Dandy Regent. 3.30 Dancing Rio. 4.00 Caernarfon Bay.

GOING: STANDARD TOTE JACKPOT MEETING
DRAW: 5F-1M, LOW NUMBERS BEST SIS

1.30 ALBERTA SELLING HANDICAP
(£1,919: 1m 5f) (16 runners)

101 45-6 BOLD BECKY 14 A P Jones 5-10-0 ... T Sprake 16
102 20/5 MELT THE CLOUDS 22 (V) M Pipe 6-9-11 ... J P Spencer (3) 9
103 -044 MUHANDIS 7 (B,C,F) G L Moore 6-9-3 ... Candy Morris 2
104 50-0 SCARLET CRESCENT 14 (V,F,G) M Usher 5-8-13 ... W Hutchinson (7) 4
105 5-04 SIR WALTER 7 (F) A J Murphy 6-8-9 ... Dean McKeown 13
106 50-4 CRY FOR FREEDOM 23 (S) J Pearce 4-8-8 ... R Price 15
107 00-4 FORMIDABLE FLAME 19 G Ham 6-8-5 ... S Drowne 3
108 10/0 NOTHING DOING 23 (F,S) W Musson 10-8-0 ... Dale Gibson 5
109 0-05 TAZKIYA 14 R Ingram 4-7-13 ... G Bardwell 14
110 -034 KATIE'S CRACKER 5 (S) M Quinn 4-7-12 ... F Norton 10
111 0-05 COASTGUARDS HERO 13J (CD) B Pearce 6-7-12 ... Martin Dwyer 12
112 6-40 SHUTTLECOCK 14 (S) D Chapman 8-7-10 ... P Fessey 1
113 -833 SANTARENE 14 P Howling 4-7-10 ... J Quinn 11
114 0/0- D'BLOW 28J J Bridger 7-7-10 ... A Polli (3) 8
115 406- O'BARNEY PARK 29 (B) P Mitchell 5-7-10 ... N Carlisle 6
116 00-0 PARONOMASIA 14 (B) J L Harris 7-7-10 ... S Righton (7) 7

9-2 Katie's Cracker, 6-1 Melt The Clouds, Muhandis, 7-1 Formidable Flame, 8-1 Sir Walter, Cry For Freedom, Santarene, 12-1 others.

2.00 BRITISH COLUMBIA CLAIMING STAKES
(£2,107: 6f) (10)

201 240- BOLDLY CLIFF 83 (B,D) A Hannam (Bel) 5-9-2 ... Dean McKeown 5
202 10-8 ONE TO GO 18J (D,G) G Charles-Jones 4-8-9 ... T Sprake 2
203 00-4 PALACEGATE TOUCH 8 (CD,F,G,S) J Berry 9-9-0 ... P Bradley (7) 9
204 400- VELVET JONES 55J G Charles-Jones 6-9-0 ... S Whitworth 4
205 250- SCURRILOUS 66 J L Harris 4-8-13 ... R Cochrane 8
206 000- FAST FRANC 64 (CD,S) T Naughton 4-8-8 ... J Quinn 10
207 -536 IVOR'S DEED 5 (V,C,F,G) P Evans 6-8-6 ... J P Spencer (3) 1
208 -050 HALBERT 9 (V,CD,F) P Burgoyne 10-8-2 ... P McCabe 7
209 5/0- SECRET TANGO 128J R Best 4-8-1 ... A Polli (3) 6
210 0-64 HEAVENLY MISS 12 (C,D,F) J Bridger 5-7-13 ... N Carlisle 3

8-11 Palacegate Touch, 6-1 Ivor's Deed, 7-1 Scurrilous, 10-1 Fast Franc, 12-1 Boldly Cliff, 14-1 One To Go, Heavenly Miss, 33-1 others.

2.30 WINTER WARMER PACKAGES MAIDEN (£3,572: 1m) (6)

301 CALYS HALO J G Smyth-Osbourne 4-9-12 ... F Norton 2
302 024- MURMOON 106 B Hanbury 4-9-12 ... A McGlone 5
303 -03-0 OUDALMUTEENA 16 (BF) V Soane 4-9-12 ... R Cochrane 3
304 -5-2 AIR OF ESTEEM 22 P Haslam 3-8-6 ... Dale Gibson 4
305 008- SWAMPY 140 N Callaghan 3-8-6 ... Dean McKeown 6
306 3-24 WOOLLY WINSOME 5 (B) B Smart 3-8-6 ... R Parham 1

7-4 Murmoon, 2-1 Air Of Esteem, 7-2 Oudalmuteena, 13-2 Woolly Winsome, 20-1 others.

3.00 ONTARIO HANDICAP (£2,646: 1m) (12)

401 03-0 GENIUS 16 (CD) S Dow 4-9-10 ... R Cochrane 6
402 -412 MAWKAB 10 (B,CD) Miss G Kelleway 4-9-7 ... J P Spencer (3) 4
403 21-5 LYCIAN 26 (CD,F,S) J Toller 4-9-7 ... S Whitworth 11
404 50-5 COLONEL CUSTER 10 J Pearce 4-9-7 ... G Bardwell 8
405 -004 TEOFILIO 19 (B,D,F) A McNae 5-8-12 ... T Sprake 5
406 00-8 VAN GURP 12 (D,G) G L Moore 6-8-8 ... J Quinn 7
407 3-10 DELIGHT OF DAWN 10 (B,CD) E Wheeler 7-8-7 ... S Carson (7) 1
408 3-56 SIZZLING 14 (F) R Hannon 7-8-6 ... Dane O'Neill 10
409 00-3 PRIORS MOOR 21 (D,S) R Armstrong 4-8-5 ... R Price 12
410 05-6 DANDY REGENT 14 (S) J L Harris 5-7-10 ... P Fessey 3
411 0-06 ARAGROVE 9 (B,C,F,G) M Usher 9-7-10 ... Nicola Wright (7) 9
412 59-0 KAMAWA 21 A P Jones 5-7-10 ... F Norton 2

5-2 Lycian, 9-2 Mawkab, 6-1 Delight Of Dawn, Priors Moor, 10-1 Sizzling, 12-1 others.

3.30 LINGFIELD PARK FOR LEISURE HANDICAP
(£3,606: 1m 4f) (6)

501 6-11 FIELDS OF OMAGH 12 (CD,F) I Balding 4-9-10 ... S Whitworth 3
502 5-13 DANCING RIO 22 (BF,CD,G,S) P Haslam 4-9-8 ... P Goode (7) 2
503 000- SPACE RACE 50 (S) C Cyzer 5-9-6 ... G Faulkner 6
504 1225 NOUKARI 8 (C,D) P Evans 6-9-6 ... C Cogan (7) 5
505 830- CALEDONIAN EXPRESS 51J J R Best 4-8-10 ... T Sprake 1
506 -303 SLIP JIG 7 (CD,S) K Burke 6-8-1 ... J Quinn 4

4-6 Fields Of Omagh, 5-1 Dancing Rio, 13-2 Noukari, 7-1 Slip Jig, 16-1 others.

4.00 NEWFOUNDLAND HANDICAP (Amateurs; £2,176: 1m 2f) (13)

601 02-0 GEE BEE BOY 18 (G) G McCourt 5-11-7 ... A Bradley (5) 5
602 60-4 GROOMS GOLD 13 (D,F) J Pearce 7-11-4 ... Mrs L Pearce 4
603 -02-1 WHATEVER'S RIGHT 7 M Usher 10-11-3 (5ex) ... Mrs A Usher (5) 1
604 20-0 BADRINATH 12 (CD,F,S) J Pearce 5-11-1 ... C Vigors 13
605 30-4 CAERNARFON BAY 7 G L Moore 4-10-12 ... I Mongan (5) 3
606 04-6 FOURDANED 12 B Johnson 6-10-11 ... Mrs K Hills (7) 6
607 00-0 GREEN JACKET 19 (B) R O'Sullivan 4-10-8 ... Miss B Fisher (7) 8
608 -058 BUT LIKE MAGIC 12 (F) P Evans 4-10-8 ... A Evans (3) 7
609 -201 CLONOE 7 (CD,F,S) R Ingram 5-10-8 (5ex) ... Miss L McIntosh (7) 2
610 000- ANCHOR VENTURE 33 (D,F) D Chapman 6-10-4 ... Miss R Clark 9
611 5-04 DON'T DROP BOMBS 12 (V) H Collingridge 10-10-0 ... Miss J Feilden 10
612 00-0 SARUM 26 (E,C,F) J Long 13-9-5 ... 7 Waters (7) 11
613 000- FIGHTER SQUADRON 213 (B) B Peacock 10-9-3 ... Mrs C Peacock (5) 12

7-2 Whatever's Right, 5-1 Clonoe, 6-1 Caernarfon Bay, 13-2 But Like Magic, 7-1 others.

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Dunwoody recuperating

RICHARD DUNWOODY is taking a break as he fights to be fit to ride leading Gold Cup contender Florida Pearl in the Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup at Leopardstown on Sunday week.

The former champion has *been on the easy list* since aggravating an old neck and shoulder injury at Doncaster 10 days ago.

Robert Parsons, his agent, said yesterday: "As the situation stands, Richard is looking at returning next Wednesday, possibly at Newton Abbot. If the worst came to the worst Richard would be prepared to return on the day of the Hennessy."

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: TONOCO (3.20 Huntingdon)
The form of Tonoco's successful hurdles debut at Warwick ... Next best: Buckland Lad (3.50 Huntingdon)

هكذا من الأصل

CYCLING

Yates sets sights firmly on Tour de France

Jeremy Whittle reports on a team who hope they have a recipe for success

SEAN YATES, one of Britain's elite group of former Tour de France stage winners, is masterminding the three-year racing plan leading to Tour de France participation for the Linda McCartney cycling team, which launched its 1999 squad in London yesterday.

"We're becoming a big team now and as such our aim is the big prize," Yates said. "We definitely want to be in the Tour de France."

Backed by a budget of £2 million, Yates, who retired from the European professional scene in 1996 after competing in 12 Tour de France races, is continuing the development process begun by the sponsorhip of Linda McCartney last year and continuing, after her death, under Sir Paul McCartney. The sponsors are committed to backing the team until 2002, and have retained an option for a further two-year involvement.

"I think Sir Paul's mission is to carry on what Linda started and believed in," Yates explained. "She really liked the idea of the cycling team and of promoting the sport and vegetarian food.

"This isn't a corporate sponsor, it's a family-scale organisation that wants to carry on what was started last year."

British cycling's leading young talent, Chris Newton, who finished eighth overall in the Prudential Tour of Britain last year, is one of the 17 vegetarian riders signed by the team. They will split their programme between British events and top-level races in Europe. With the week-long Prudential Tour of Britain, which takes place in May, in mind, Yates and his multinational team are embarking on a punishing schedule of stage races, including the Tour of Langkawi in Malaysia next month, several European stage races and the Peace Race in the Czech Republic.

"The PruTour is our priority this year," Yates said, "but there's no point putting young riders into races in which they get thoroughly shattered, as it doesn't do anything for them. We're concentrating on building a platform from which to expand the team and if we do well this year and the sponsor gets a good return, then over the next two years they will support the further growth of the team."

"Me and the kids are really happy to support the Linda McCartney cycling team," McCartney said. "This 'clean machine' proves that vegetarians aren't all carrot-munching weedy freaks, and keeps alive the memory of our beloved Linda."

In addition to Newton and Julian Winn, the 1998 PruTour stage-winner, the team brings together a clutch of young Australian riders and well-known British stalwarts such as Johnny Clay, as well as Chris Lillywhite and Chris Walker — both former Milk Race winners.

Yates, who hopes to use his contacts in Europe to enhance the team's international reputation over the next year, is well aware of the task his riders face.

"Coming from the background of racing that they have had, even the smaller European races are a big leap for them," he said. "But we want to be competitive and in the thick of the action. Once we have achieved some good results, then we'll take stock."

With a London Tour de France start rumoured for early next century and the present ethical crisis having a negative impact on leading European sponsors, Yates is optimistic that a Tour call will come sooner rather than later.

"Until now the Tour's been a law unto itself," Yates said, "but with the new ethical stance taken by the race organisation, they may be forced to look elsewhere for teams that fit the bill. That may work in our favour, because ours is a clean, vegetarian lifestyle and we intend to stay that way."

RICHARD CANNON

Newton sends the pigeons flying at the launch of the Linda McCartney cycling team in London yesterday

Forrester relishes treble chance

SARAH POTTER

It seems appropriate that Steph Forrester earned three sporting Blues during her Cambridge University days for, five years on, she is the women's British triathlon champion. Having only taken up the sport three seasons ago, the Scot intends to swim the 1,500 metres, cycle the 40 kilometres and run the 10 kilometres fast enough to win a medal at the sport's Olympic debut in the 2000 Games in Sydney.

Yet full-time commitment for this former chemical process engineer only began in November, when National Lottery funding was confirmed. Since then, Forrester has swapped winter in Huddersfield for summer in Sydney and will join the Great Britain squad in South Africa after they fly out next week for a two-month training camp.

"It was extremely hard juggling work and training," she said. "But in some ways I like that because it makes you a tougher person. Getting up at 4am to cycle around Huddersfield in winter is not the nicest feeling, but when I turned up in Japan for the first race last season and looked at everyone else on the starting line, I appreciated what I'd been through to get there."

Forrester admits that even her own family have questioned her sanity. "Most of my family live in Aberdeen and can't really believe what I'm doing. It probably seems like I've spent eight years at university to get a good degree and career prospects, just to throw it away on triathlon. But they feel better now because they've seen my results and realise I'm good enough. I've been involved in sport since I was 10, but never shown enough ability to go full time in anything."

Nevertheless, Forrester swam for Scotland during the mid-1980s. "I took it very seriously," she said. "It was a tough routine, training twice a day early mornings and evenings, but I loved it. More so than the competition, because I'm not a swimmer."

That realisation came in 1987, while at Edinburgh University. "I was swimming pretty badly," she said. "It was a combination of not getting on with the coach and putting most emphasis on my course, because I was enjoying it so much."

Four years later, Cambridge University opened her mind to other sports and fired an interest in triathlon. "I did swim for a year or so, to get my Blue for my CV to be honest," she said. "But I played football, which is huge at Cambridge, with 45 women's teams in the inter-collegiate league, because it was something I always wanted to do. When I was going through the influential stage, Aberdeen were one of the best clubs in Europe. They won the Cup Winners' Cup in 1983 and the whole city was football daft."

Forrester became the university captain and passed an FA coaching certificate. It also led to her second Blue. "It's actually much easier to get a Blue at Cambridge than it is at Edinburgh," she said. "The system at Cambridge was a complete joke because it was so political."

However, she was delighted to receive her third honour — in athletics. "A friend of mine started to drag me out running after he'd started to train with a Kiwi guy who'd done a lot of triathlons," she said. "I got into the athletics team at university and stepped on the track for the first time at the beginning of May in my final year. About four weeks later I had my Blue."

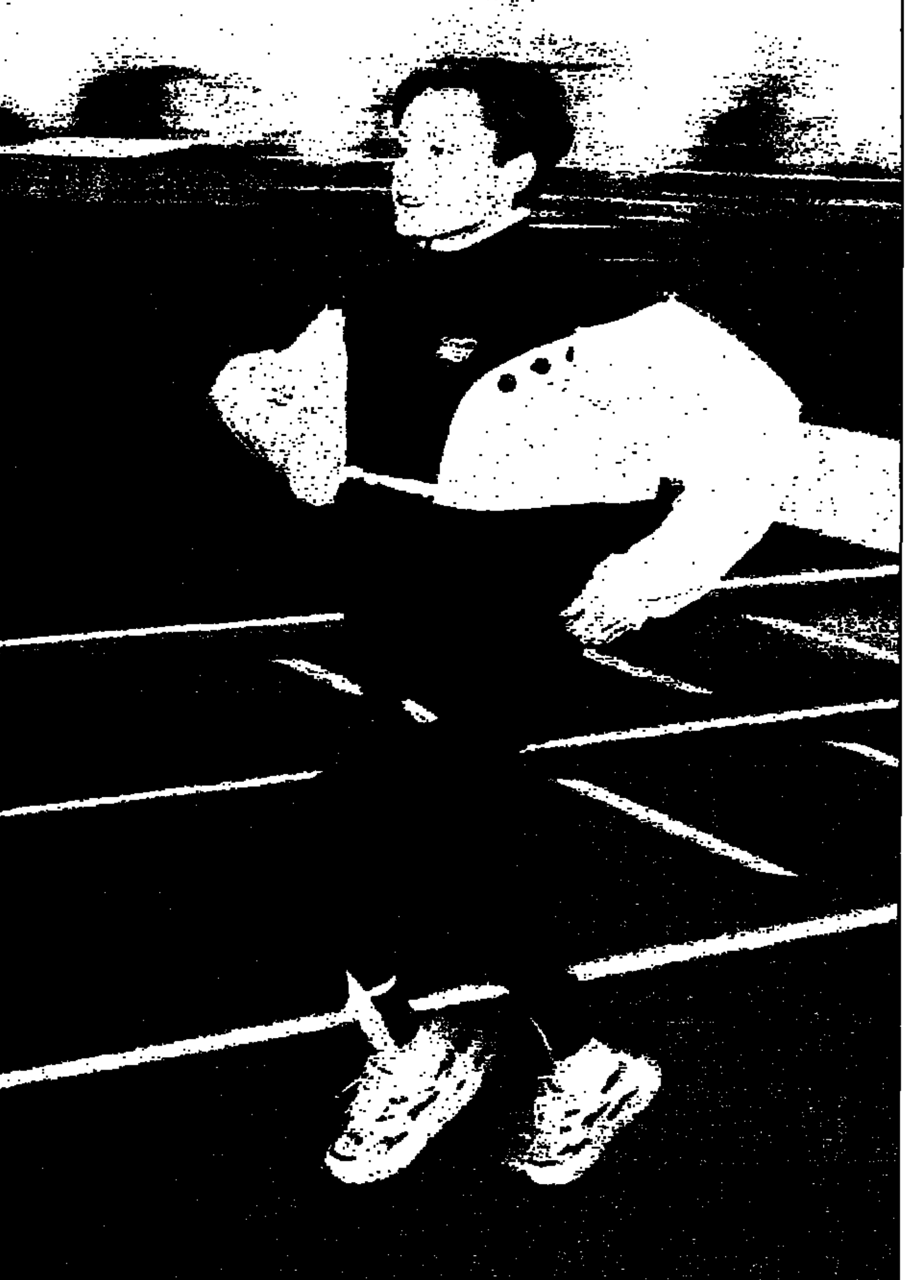
Her sporting ambitions became set on triathlon and she took a two-year post-doctoral position at Sydney University to test her ability. "I picked it because of triathlon," Forrester said. "I wanted somewhere warm to train but also to have some fun because I'd worked pretty hard to get my PhD."

Within six months she sustained a stress fracture of her ankle. "I did too much training," she said. "I wasn't able to run for almost a year but that helped me to adjust to cycling. I hadn't done much before so it was actually very exciting, seeing this rapid improvement in my times. It did cross my mind to stay in Australia, but I wanted to come back and make the British team."

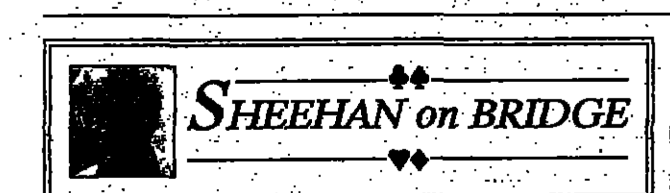
Next she wants Olympic gold. "I was five minutes behind the winner in the world championships last August," she said. "But if I'd improved my swimming by 30 seconds I would have got into a better biking pack. That could have cost three minutes, so I know I'm close. Beating the Australians will be tough, but I'm going for the Olympics, and giving up my job and my flat doesn't worry me. For this chance, I'll cope with whatever comes into my path."

> ‘I'm going for the Olympics, and giving up my job and flat doesn't worry me’

CHRIS ISON



Forrester pounds around the track during a recent training stint at Bath University



SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By Robert Sheehan, Bridge Correspondent

When the defenders have winners in two suits, judging which to cash can be difficult. This example is from the 1998 Gold Cup semi-final between Cohen and Price.

Dealer North | Love all | IMPs

North: ♠ K Q 7 ♡ 10 3 2 ◊ 7 6 5 ♣ Q J 10 7

West: ♠ A 9 ♡ Q 8 7 5 ◊ K J 4 ♣ A 5 4 3

East: ♠ J 10 ♡ K J 6 4 ◊ Q 10 9 2 ♣ 9 6 2

South: ♠ 8 6 5 4 3 2 ♡ A 9 ◊ A 8 3 ♣ K 8

W	N	E	S
–	Pass	Pass	1S
Double	2S	Double	Pass
3C	Pass	3D	3S
All Pass			

Contract: Three Spades by South. Lead: four of diamonds.

I was East, playing with Howard Cohen. My double of North's Two Spades was "responsive", not penalty; it says I want to compete the partscore.

Declarer (David Price) took the queen of diamonds with the ace and continued with the king of clubs. West should duck this, but he won, cashed the king of diamonds and when I played the ten, switched to a low heart. I played the king and declarer won with the ace. Now declarer erred by playing a spade – had he played clubs throwing away red losers, the defence have no chance.

West correctly took the ace of spades, and now we were in the cash-out situation I mention above. Deciding to play me for an initial heart holding of KJx, he led queen and another heart, and so declarer could ruff, draw trumps and get his diamond away on a club.

There were two separate ways in which West should get the situation right. First, he could continue with a low heart after winning the ace of spades. Then when East wins with the jack he can tell that West must have four hearts (else he would have led queen and another). So East switches to a diamond, playing West for the jack. The other way West can tell that East has four diamonds and four hearts is that with three hearts and five diamonds, East would have bid Three Diamonds over Two Spades; he would not double, implying he had no clear bid.

□ Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

KEENE on CHESS

By Raymond Keene, Chess Correspondent

London Clubs

The final of the London Clubs knockout tournament resulted in a 3-1 win for Home House against The Athenaeum. The Athenaeum side was weakened by the absence of Shaun Taulbut, their board one, a former European junior champion. Taulbut, a city banker, was unavoidably detained by the Brazilian currency crisis.

Here are two games from the final match. In one game, Bob Wade, the former British champion, playing for Home House, overcomes an unsound attack, while in the other Arthur Freeman, representing The Athenaeum, pulls off a fine queen sacrifice to turn the tables in an apparently desperate situation.

White: Ali Mortazavi
Black: Arthur Freeman
London Clubs, 1999
Scandinavian defence

	White	Black
1	e4	d5
2	exd5	Nf6
3	d4	Bg4
4	Be2	Bxe2
5	Qxe2	Qxd5
6	Nf3	Nc6
7	c4	Qf5
8	a3	0-0-0
9	d5	Nb8
10	Nc3	e6
11	0-0	e6
12	dxe6	Bd6
13	exf7	Ng4
14	Qe4	Qh5
15	Bf4	Nc6
16	Nd5	Nf6
17	Qe6+	Kb8
18	Nxf6	gxf6
19	Qxf6	Be7
20	Qe6	Rhf8
21	Na5	Nd4
22	Qxe7	Ne2+
23	Kh1	Nxf4
24	Rad1	Qxd1
25	Nc6+	bxc6
26	Re1	Qg4
27	Qb4+	Ka8
28	Rg1	Nd3
29	Qd2	Rxf7
30	f3	Rxf3

White resigns

Diagram of final position

White: Bob Wade
Black: Kester George
London Clubs, 1999
Bogo-Indian defence

	White	Black
1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	e6
3	Nf3	Bb4+
4	Bd2	Bxd2+
5	Qxd2	0-0
6	Nc3	d5
7	e3	Ne4
8	Qc2	f5
9	Ne5	c6
10	Bd3	Nd7
11	cxd5	exd5
12	f4	Qh4+
13	g3	Nxg3
14	Qf2	Nxe5
15	dxe5	Be6
16	Qxg3	Qxg3+
17	hxg3	a6
18	0-0-0	b5
19	g4	g6
20	gxf5	Bxf5
21	Bxf5	Rxf5
22	Ne2	Rf7
23	Nd4	c5
24	Ne6	d4
25	exd4	cxd4
26	Rxd4	Rc8+
27	Kb1	h5
28	Rg1	Kh7

Black resigns

Wijk aan Zee website

□ The Wijk aan Zee games can be followed on www.chess2.lostcity.nl/hoogovens/.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

HESVAN
a. A fast
b. A month
c. A log shoot

MORILLO
a. A pear
b. A muscle
c. Jam

NOIX
a. Night
b. The thigh
c. A French Department

HAHAM
a. A bluff
b. A sage
c. Sun-dried meat

Answers on page 50

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Eriksson-Templier, European junior, 1998.

The pawn cover in front of the black king has been blasted away. How did White now complete the demolition?

Solution on page 50

Doctor with the right prescription for future of Games

One of the first visits by a member of the International Olympic Committee to an "Olympic venue" was not to Salt Lake City or Nagano, but to the sleepy Shropshire town of Much Wenlock. The visit was made long ago by the mighty Baron Pierre de Coubertin, and true to what was to become a controversial Olympic practice, he was given a priceless gift — in this case it was the complete blueprint for the revival of the modern Olympic Games.

It was given to him by a colourful local hero, Dr William Penny Brookes, who started his own version of the games modelled on those of classical Greece in 1850. De Coubertin liked the idea so much that, in time, he was to claim it for his own, but after meeting Brookes he noted: "If the Olympic Games, that modern Greece has not yet been able to revive, still survives today it is due, not to a Greek, but to Dr William Penny Brookes."

The old baron should have paid even closer attention to the good doctor, for when the two sat down together in the low-beamed bar of an old Wenlock coaching inn, the Gaskell Arms, there was one point over which they fiercely disagreed — the siting of the revived games.

> ‘De Coubertin liked the idea so much that he claimed it himself’

Norman Wood, now the general secretary of the Wenlock Olympian Society, said: "It is ironic with all this trouble going on with Samaranch today that Dr Brookes wanted the games sited permanently in Greece."

Brookes had built up strong contacts with Greece over the staging of his games and in 1877 George I, the Greek king, donated a silver cup to be awarded to the winner of the pentathlon. Brookes paraded banners with Greek inscriptions at his games and winners were honoured with laurel branches and medals bearing the image of Nike — the Greek goddess of victory.

De Coubertin, by contrast, thought that the games would have more impact if they were hawked from continent to continent like a travelling circus. The trouble is, of course, that touting the Games from greedy city to greedy city has landed the Olympics in its biggest mess since 1896.

Since that first meeting the two Olympic movements have headed in completely different directions. They both still survive, though both at present are in crisis. De Coubertin's Games took the route of being grand and greedy, with professionalism, commercialisation and, ultimately, corruption, bribery, drugs and cheating. Where once he called on the youth of the world to gather to celebrate sport, we now see ageing mobsters in blazers and junkies in tracksuits. Dr Brookes's games, on the other hand, have have remained minute, traditional, amateur, unexploited, unnoticed and virtually broke. Their problem with money is simple. They don't have any.

BRYANT'S EYE

Fascists rise 16

A couple of months ago the house in which Brookes was born and lived came up for sale. For years it had been the headquarters of the local branch of Lloyds Bank and the Wenlock Olympian Committee would dearly have loved to have bought it to house their treasured archives. Their appeals to English Heritage and other funding bodies came to nothing and the house was sold to a private buyer for around £200,000. It is not just the people of Much Wenlock who are fuming at this missed opportunity.

John Disley, a former Olympic steeplechaser and now chairman of the Olympians, a club made up of British Olympic competitors, said: "Here is a national sporting site of special importance to the history of sport. Why should we expect a very small town to preserve it for posterity? They simply can't afford it, yet nobody seems to want to help them. Just imagine if the Germans discovered that they had "invented" the Olympic Games in 1850. Somebody like Mercedes would have poured millions into saving the sites and the archives immediately."

> ‘We see mobsters in blazers and junkies in tracksuits’

The town's meagre sporting facilities, too, are hopelessly run down and, though they have applied to the National Lottery, the 2,500 ratepayers are left to pick up the bills.

De Coubertin's great Games, meanwhile, are going through agonies bought on by a surfeit of money, arrogance and the love of luxury. Presiding over the culture of excess is the successor to de Coubertin, the Spanish marquis, Samaranch.

Much Wenlock has had a regal-like visit from Samaranch. He was there in 1994 to mark the 100th anniversary of the foundation in Paris of what was to become the International Olympic Committee. In Lausanne, the IOC had decided that it was time to settle their debt to Dr Brookes, but on this occasion the Olympic supremo left behind him neither wealth nor scandal.

In return for their blueprint of the modern Olympic Games, Much Wenlock received an oak tree — a Spanish oak tree, planted by His Excellency Juan Antonio Samaranch.

JOHN BRYANT

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

‘RomoCop’ to give no quarter to Falcons

FROM OLIVER HOLT IN MIAMI

THEY call him "the anti-Elway", the dirtiest player in the National Football League (NFL). He is the kind of player that they are trying to airbrush out of this sport, somebody whose excesses are made to seem like an anachronism by the official version of American football that the authorities love to propagate. In that land of anaesthesia, there are no career-ending injuries, no spitting, no gouging, no trench warfare and no room for men such as Bill Romanowski.

Romanowski has become a curiosity. When he appeared at the media day in Pro Player Stadium here on Tuesday, journalists came to stare at him as though they had been allowed into a zoo to gape at a wild animal. They call him a "throwback", someone who plays this game the way it used to be played, back when gridiron fields still got muddy and O. J. Simpson had sideburns.

If the Denver Broncos beat the Atlanta Falcons on Sunday to win their second successive Super Bowl, though, they will owe as much to the scrapping, barging, grappling efforts of their linebacker as they will to the elegant throws of their quarterback, John Elway, or the bulldozing rushing of their running back, Terrell Davis. The Broncos' offense gets most of the praise for their success, but Romanowski is the raging pulse of a defense that has got plenty of fans of its own.

Romanowski's creed is destruction. Creativity is his enemy and his vocabulary is peppered with words such as "hurt", "hit", "shake" and "rattle". If Denver are to win, they will have to unsettle the Atlanta offense, with its twin weapons of Chris Chandler, the quarterback, and Jamal Anderson, the running back. "RomoCop" will attempt it by any means necessary.

His notoriety hit new heights last season when he spat in the face of J. J. Stokes during a game against the San Francisco 49ers that was being televised live from coast to coast. And that was after Romanowski had grabbed Stokes in the groin *à la* Vinnie Jones on Gazza. Other highlights have been a kick administered to the head of a fallen Phoenix Cardinal, a flying head-butt that broke the jaw of Kerry Collins, the Carolina Panthers quarterback, and some late hits on the legendary Jerry Rice that sparked a brawl during training. And Rice was on the same team.

This season he has been tame by comparison. There was just the time that he took out Troy Aikman, the Dallas Cowboys' quarterback, breaking his collarbone and putting him out of action for six weeks. "People were upset I didn't show enough sorrow for him," Romanowski sneered. "I just said I couldn't believe he didn't slide out of bounds. As for Collins, that was all about the angle I hit him. Kerry turned his head just as I nailed him."

Even at the media day, Romanowski, 32, exuded quiet menace that was all the more fearsome for his control and politeness. He is not as obviously bulky as some of his defensive colleagues, but he possesses the kind of brooding, American blue-collar aggression captured so well in *The Deer Hunter*. "The noisy ones who go around saying they are so tough usually aren't," Mike Shanahan, the Broncos' coach, said. "It's those silent guys you aren't expecting it from who'll sneak up and crack you."

His opponents say he is more than sneaky. "Dirty", "cheap" and "classless" are three of the more generous descriptions that have been offered this week. "Sometimes I wish I was able to play way back 20 or 30 years ago, when being mean and dirty and nasty or whatever they call me was praised rather than criticised," Romanowski said. "Old players keep coming up to me saying, 'Keep it up, Romo.' That's great, as long as they pay my fines. I keep playing like this, and I'm going to end up in the poorhouse.

"When I think of a throwback player, I think of a guy who goes out there and plays every play as if it was his last. I don't try to hurt people, but if you can put a hit on somebody and shake them up for a while, that is what the game is all about. When you can knock people out of the game, you give your team an advantage and that is what it is all about. I just want to do the best for my team."

Romanowski, who won two Super Bowls with the 49ers before he moved to Denver, spends more than $100,000 of his $1.4 million (about £850,000) annual salary on employing a fitness trainer who used to be an Olympic athlete, as well as a chiropractor and a dietician. For a "paid assassin" — a team-mate's description — he is a clinical, calculating player. But the rages he works himself into before games have also become the stuff of anecdotes in the Broncos' locker-room.

"I'd become close friends with him," Bubby Brister, the back-up quarterback, said, "spent a lot of time together — wives, kids, everything. Then first pre-season game, I'm laughing it up in the locker-room, slapping Romo in the pads. He looks up, real slow. He's sweating, breathing hard, shaking, working up the rage. I thought, 'What in hell is this?' We're talking weird. Lunatic time. Jekyll and Hyde stuff."

Shanahan has witnessed it too. "I see Romo's eyes glaze over," he said. "I know he wants to whack anybody walking down the street. You can see he's making up real bad stuff that opponents might have done to his family."

On Sunday night, Romanowski will be thinking about Chandler and Anderson. And they will be thinking about him.

Romanowski's fearsome reputation even has some of his Denver Broncos team-mates worried for their safety. Photograph: Marc Aspland

LINKS

WEBSITES: superbowl.lycos.com
www.nfl.com
TELEVISION:
Sky Sports One, Sunday 10.30pm (live)

At work: Romanowski sends a Green Bay Packer flying

RUGBY LEAGUE

Leeds face search for Murray's successor

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

GRAHAM MURRAY'S arrival as coach 12 months ago was described as the best move Leeds Rhinos had made in years. Dismay accompanied the surprise announcement yesterday that he would be returning to Australia at the end of the forthcoming season to become head coach of North Sydney Bears.

Leeds were talking to Murray about extending his initial two-year contract when the North Sydney offer, described by him as "too good to refuse", arrived two weeks ago. He is to succeed Peter Louis, their veteran coach, for the 2000 season, which gives the Rhinos a year to find his replacement.

Murray, 44, admitted to sleepless nights before agreeing a three-year deal with North Sydney. "It has happened fairly quickly. I love what I'm doing, coaching this team and living in Leeds, but I was always going to go home eventually and North Sydney are a strong club in the National Rugby League," he said.

With the popular Murray at the helm, an unfancied Leeds became contenders for the JJB Super League title. They were beaten 10-4 by Wigan Warriors in the inaugural Grand Final last October, but after two decades of under-achievement, had re-established themselves as a creditable force. Iestyn Harris, Adrian Morley and Darren Fleary, in particular, have thrived under Murray's tutelage.

The decision has made Murray even more determined, with the Challenge Cup a fortnight away. "There are a lot of good things happening here and I want to be part of them this year. I would like to think I can go out with a bang and that will be at Wembley and the Grand Final. We've got to turn what we did last season into silverware," he said.

After the exhaustive search that resulted in Murray's arrival last January from the defunct Hunter Mariners in Australia, Gary Hetherington, the Leeds chief executive, must begin looking again. "There is no urgency, we now have an eight-strong team of coaches," he said.

Castleford Tigers have announced new club sponsors, the Safestyle UK glazing company, for the 1999 season. Darren Shaw, the Sheffield Eagles forward, has been appointed club captain.

SNOW REPORTS

SKI CLUB

Resort	Depth (cm) L	Depth (cm) U	Conditions Piste	Conditions Runs to Resort	Conditions Off/p	Weather (5pm)	°C	Last snow
Andorra								
Soldeu	80	100	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-4	27/01
Austria								
Kitzbühel	15	82	Fair	Open	Varied	Snow	1	27/01
Obergurgl	35	175	Fair	Hard	Varied	Snow	-5	27/01
Söll	20	70	Good	Open	Varied	Snow	-4	27/01
Canada								
Lake Louise	100	131	Good	Open	Powder	Cloud	-8	27/01
France								
Alpe d'Huez	85	180	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-5	27/01
Flaine	90	285	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-5	27/01
La Clusaz	90	150	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	0	27/01
La Plagne	95	180	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-6	27/01
La Tania	92	129	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-2	27/01
Megève	50	140	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	0	27/01
Méribel	70	120	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-3	27/01
Tignes	61	161	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-6	27/01
Val Thorens	70	130	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-5	27/01
Val d'Isère	105	160	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-3	27/01
Valmorel	60	160	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-2	27/01
Italy								
Cervinia	20	120	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-7	27/01
Cortina	35	60	Good	Hard	Varied	Cloud	-8	27/01
M di Campiglio	50	100	Good	Open	Varied	Cloud	0	13/01
Norway								
Geilo	70	70	Good	Open	Varied	Fine	-6	24/01
Switzerland								
Crans Montana	30	120	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-1	27/01
Klosters	35	130	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-2	27/01
Murren	50	140	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-6	27/01
Saas Fee	47	205	Good	Open	Varied	Snow	-8	27/01
St Moritz	30	80	Good	Some	Varied	Snow	-2	27/01
Verbier	20	165	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-1	27/01
Zermatt	55	145	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-5	27/01
United States								
Aspen	105	133	Good	Open	Powder	Cloud	-9	27/01
Deer Valley	155	170	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	0	27/01

http://www.skiclub.co.uk — L = lower slopes. U = upper slopes.

GOLF

Golfing greats awarded lap of honour at Millennium Open

BY MEL WEBB

WITH each succeeding week, the European Tour gets further away from Europe. Having spent the first two tournaments of the season in South Africa, the flying circus has decamped to Australia for week three. The players could not go much further without starting to come back.

There were young faces and some not so young abroad yesterday at The Vines, on the outer fringes of Perth, where the Heineken Classic starts today, but the more senior citizens were not looking to the past, as they are sometimes wont to do, but into the future.

Lee Trevino and Gary Player were yesterday celebrating the fact that they and others of a similarly distinguished lineage will be putting on their own special sideshow at the Millennium Open Championship at St Andrews next year.

They are to take part in a parade of old-time winners of golf's oldest major championship when they play the inward nine holes of the Old Course on the Tuesday before the start of the tournament proper.

"Can you imagine how many people would want to watch that?" Player said. Yes, and the answer is: plenty. Trevino, wisecracking still at 60, and Player, an enduringly trim 63, are at The Vines to compete in a 54-hole tournament running alongside the main event, but will not expect be able to divert the spotlight away from the giants of the modern game.

Leading them is Ernie Els, the big, amiable and wondrously gifted South African who has made a more than satisfactory start to the season by winning the South African PGA title and finishing sixth in his country's Open.

Els lives for major championships but last season was a moderate one in that respect. His best finish was sixteenth (in the Masters), but with a troublesome back injury put right, he is looking for a much better year. Sixteenth was also Ian Woosnam's best major finish in 1998, but for the moment winning anything would do for the Welshman, whose last victory was nearly 18 months ago.

Meanwhile, David Duval, whose 59 to win the Bob Hope Classic on Sunday will live with him forever, faces tough opposition in the Phoenix Open, which also starts today. Sixteen of last year's top 20 US money-winners will be in action.

SQUASH

Hallamshire sweep to the top by employing home help

BY COLIN MCQUILLAN

WITH the world's leading men still involved in the Tournament of Champions in New York this week, Hallamshire's decision to retain a largely domestically-employed squad paid off with a 3-2 home win over Manchester Northern that took the Sheffield side to the top of group A in the SRA National League for the first time with 24 points.

Manchester were without Graham Ryding and Nick Taylor, their two top players, but Phil Whitlock, who defends his over-35 title at the Business Pagers National Championships in Manchester next week, contributed a 3-1 second-string away point against Adam Toes, and Suzanne Horner picked up the fifth-string women's point from Cheryl Beaumont. However, the visitors could not contain the home-court efficiency of Paul Lord, Nick Matthew and Nick Wall in the other men's rubbers.

Ryding and Taylor went out early in the Tournament of Champions, but stayed with other players as referees on the transparent showcourt inside Grand Central Station in New York to exploit growing American interest in the game.

In the Tournament of Champions quarter-finals, Peter Nicol, the British Open champion, defeated Simon Parke, the British national champion, in straight games and now meets his arch-rival, Jonathon Power, of Canada, the world champion, in the semi-finals.

Nicol might otherwise have been leading Chingford's UK Packaging squad against Loughborough, whose normal first string, Alex Gough, lost another quarter-final in New York to Ahmed Barada, of Egypt. Led by Julian Wellings, the Chingford side recorded a 4-1 home win to stay top of group B with 30 points.

Parke normally leads for Nottingham in the National League, but was ably replaced in a 4-1 group A home victory over Duffield by Lee Beachill, with Natalie Grainger, of South Africa, brought in to ensure the fifth-string point against Tania Bailey.

UniS Guildford also had a 4-1 home win, over Lee-on-Solent, to stay top of group C with 32 points, despite the absence of Paul Johnson, their England No 1, who needed five hard games to defeat Del Harris for a semi-final place in New York against Barada. Harris is scheduled to meet Johnson again in the national quarter-finals next week.

Martin Fletcher explains why 30,000 Ulstermen will invade Dublin on Saturday

Rugby unites troubled Province

Such an army of fans will be following Ulster's rugby team to Dublin for the European Cup final against Colomiers on Saturday that one enterprising Belfast publican, Sydney John, tried to charter a high-speed ferry for 750 supporters to avoid the crush.

His efforts failed. All he could find was an old tub that would take six hours. John and 15 of his bar staff instead queued at Belfast railway station from 3am last Saturday to snap up 160 train tickets for his most valued customers the moment they went on sale.

"It's unbelievable," he said of the excitement that the game is generating in Northern Ireland. He has not seen an event that has united this divided province quite like this since Barry McGuigan fought Eusebio Pedrosa for the world featherweight title at Loftus Road in 1985.

More than 30,000 supporters will be invading the Irish Republic for the biggest game in Ulster rugby's history, and another 30,000 failed to get tickets. The Automobile Association has warned that the notoriously awful road between Belfast and Dublin — a reflection of the fraught relations between north and south — will "take a real hammering". Translink, Northern Ireland's bus and railway company, is laying on eight trains, some borrowed from the Republic, and about 100 coaches and mini-buses. "It's huge, absolutely huge," said a Translink spokeswoman. "From a public transport point of view, we have never carried this amount of people to one event."

The Ulster players and their supporters celebrate together after the nail-biting semi-final victory over Stade Français at Ravenhill earlier this month

David Trimble and Seamus Mallon, Northern Ireland's Unionist and Nationalist leaders, will be there. So will Mary McAleese, the Irish President, Bertie Ahern, Ireland's Taoiseach, and Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary. For the first time, Lansdowne Road will witness the extraordinary sight of a capacity crowd of 49,000 chanting "Ulster, Ulster", and waving the red-and-white Ulster flags that are more commonly used to stake out loyalist territory in the North.

It will be the biggest attendance yet at a European Cup final, and as Jean-Luc Sadourny, the French international who captains Colomiers, said last week: "Ulster will have an extra player on the pitch and that will be the crowd."

Most sports in Northern Ireland are viewed as Catholic or Protestant, and rugby is no exception. Nationalists would normally feel as little affinity for the game invented by William Webb Ellis at an English public school as they do for cricket, and stick to Gaelic football and hurling. Cup fever has not yet reached such a pitch that Gerry Adams, of Sinn Fein, is planning to attend the game, but when Gaelic football clubs start applying for tickets and the Nationalist *Irish News* carries the results of Colomiers's games in France, it is clear that the traditional sectarian barriers have at least temporarily been lowered.

This is hardly surprising. The Province has had precious little to smile about or celebrate over the past 30 years, and so seizes every chance. Moreover sport has a unique capacity for catching the imagination, and only the most hardline Republican could fail to concede that Ulster's epic, giant-killing journey to the final has been utterly compelling.

This is a team that was losing 14-0 after just four minutes of its opening game against Edinburgh Reivers last September. It is a team with a captain who has been consigned to the sidelines by injury, just two players who command regular places in Ireland's team, wings who are often only substitutes for Ballymena, and a 35-year-old prop who four years ago was playing social rugby only.

> 'This is a team of indomitable spirit that has already beaten the two best sides in France'

It is a team of indomitable spirit that beat the two best teams in France in the quarter and semi-finals, and the groundsman, Brian Elliott, has yet to remove the 33-27 score of Ulster's gloriously improbable victory over Stade Français on January 9 from the Ravenhill scoreboard. It is true that England's teams boycotted the tournament this year, but that should in no way detract from Ulster's achievement.

Michael Reid, chief executive of the Irish Rugby Football Union's Ulster branch, has no illusions that his team's success will bring any lasting unity, but he does believe its achievements will hasten the day when rugby ceases to be viewed as a Protestant sport. At a time when his organisation is making strenuous efforts to promote the game in Catholic schools and colleges "it can only help," he says. "At the moment the heroes of a child in a Catholic area are going to be Gaelic sports heroes. We're now offering them other heroes."

Mason on ideal stage in Ulster's finest hour

BY DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE same XV that played so nobly against Stade Français will carry Ulster's hopes into the final of the European Cup at Lansdowne Road on Saturday. The intervening three weeks since that memorable Belfast semi-final, won 33-27, have taken no toll on Ulster resources as they prepare for the most significant day in the rugby history of the Province.

The only amendment restores Stanley McDowell, the utility back, to the replacements against a Colomiers team that is likely to start with Jean-Luc Sadourny and Fabien Galthie, the two France internationals, at full back and scrum half respectively, though they may not finish. Colomiers will not confirm their XV until tomorrow, but the fitness record this season of both players is poor and Sadourny has already admitted that, if he plays in the final, he is unlikely to be available to play for France against Ireland the following week.

Saturday will provide Simon Mason with the ideal stage on which to remind the Ireland selectors of his talents. There was surprise in the province when Ulster's leading points scorer — 126 points in Europe this season — was overlooked from the national training squad released 48 hours after the victory over Stade Français, but a packed house at Lansdowne Road will test Mason's maturity.

The former Richmond full back, now 25, can only make the replacements bench of the A team to play France at Donnybrook on February 5 and if he is to add to the three full caps he won in 1996, he has to force past Conor O'Shea.

ULSTER: S Mason; S Coulter, J Cunningham, J Bell, A Park; D Humphreys (captain), A Matchett; J Fitzpatrick, A Clarke, R Irwin, M Blair, G Longwell, S McKinty, A Ward, A McWhirter. Replacements: S McDowell, B Cunningham, S Bell, D Topping, S Duncan, G Leslie, R Weir.

Gatland has selection puzzle to solve

BY DAVID HANDS

ONLY four members of the Ulster side that has enjoyed such an outstanding season in European competition have won consideration by Ireland for the opening round of the Five Nations Championship on Saturday week. Of that quartet, David Humphreys, the fly half, is the one likely to cause Warren Gatland, the national coach, the most heartache as he determines his XV to start against France at Lansdowne Road.

Gatland must go either with the tried and trusted Eric Elwood as his pivot, or with Humphreys, who has been in inspirational form as captain of his province. But part of Ireland's pre-Christmas problem was the inability of their back division to pose a consistent threat or, indeed, any threat at all at a time when they possess a combative pack.

Gatland and Elwood go back a long way in Connacht rugby and the coach knows precisely what he can extract from a player who is also his country's goalkicker. If he opts for Humphreys, Gatland must also give the goalkicking duties to Humphreys or to Conor O'Shea, neither of whom kick regularly for province or club; but Humphreys is playing so confidently that he may be preferred.

Of Ulster's other three representatives, Jonathan Bell and Andy Ward are certain starters, but Justin Fitzpatrick must serve his time behind the experienced props, Peter Clohessy and Paul Wallace.

There may be surprise in Munster that David Corkery has not found a place among the back-row forwards, but Gatland is keeping his options open by naming Eric Miller and Victor Costello alongside Ward and Dion O'Cuinneagain, who will surely be the first-choice flankers.

Graham Henry, the Wales coach, is almost certain to be without Gareth Thomas, the Cardiff wing, who is still recovering from a shoulder operation, going into his first Five Nations experience against Scotland at Murrayfield on Saturday week. Henry may also be without Craig Quinnell, the Richmond lock who suffered knee damage in his club's 23-11 Premiership defeat by Leicester on Tuesday. Allan Bateman may provide cover on the wing rather than his club position of centre.

IRELAND SQUAD (v France): Backs: C O'Shea (London Irish), G Dempsey (Terenure College), J Bishop (London Irish), J Bell (Dungannon), K Maggs (Bath), R Henderson (Wasps), E Elwood (Galwegians), D Humphreys (Dungannon), C McGuinness (St Mary's College), C Scally (UCD). Forwards: R Corrigan (Lansdowne), J Fitzpatrick (Dungannon), P Clohessy (Young Munster), P Wallace (Saracens), R Nesdale (Newcastle), K Wood (Harlequins), J Davidson (Castres), M O'Kelly (London Irish), P Johns (Saracens), V Costello (St Mary's College), A Ward (Ballynahinch), E Miller (Terenure College), D O'Cuinneagain (Sale).

WALES SQUAD (v Scotland): Backs: S Howarth (Sale), K Morgan (Pontypridd), D James (Pontypridd), M Robinson (Swansea), G Thomas (Cardiff), A Bateman (Richmond), M Taylor (Swansea), S Gibbs (Swansea), N Jenkins (Pontypridd), R Howley (Cardiff), D Llewellyn (Ebbw Vale). Forwards: A Lewis (Cardiff) D Morris (Swansea), D Young (Cardiff), C Anthony (Swansea), J Humphreys (Cardiff), B Williams (Richmond), C Quinnell (Richmond), C Wyatt (Llanelli), M Voyle (Llanelli), I Gough (Pontypridd), C Charvis (Swansea), G Lewis (Pontypridd), M Williams (Pontypridd), S Quinnell (Llanelli).

Russ happy to beat his drum to different tune

Christopher Irvine meets the coach plotting a cup upset

Tony Russ spent six years as director of rugby at Leicester when they and Bath hogged the prizes, but those times are a fading memory. Heady days at Welford Road have given way to grim economic reality in the rugby backwater of Liverpool. Monday morning at Blundellsands and £400 gate receipts from the previous match on Saturday is meagre even by the standards of Waterloo Drummers.

In the bar of the wooden clubhouse, Russ, 52, director of rugby at Waterloo, encapsulated the view of most clubs outside the Allied Dunbar Premiership elite. "I don't think there's any desire here to get into the first division," he said. "We simply couldn't hack it financially. The objective of the likes of Waterloo is to manage your resources so you don't go bust, and within those limitations, to be as successful as you can."

Waterloo occupy fifth place in the second division. On Sunday, they are away at Wasps in the Tetley's Cup fifth round. "Of course, I miss visiting those places and we're all looking forward to it, but I hardly see it as a plum tie. It's going to be hard to win and we're not going to make that much money, but you've only got to look what Henley did to Bedford to see what's possible," he said.

In 1993, the year Leicester won the cup under Russ, Waterloo sprung one of the biggest surprises in the 27-year history of the competition when they eliminated Bath. The cup holds mostly happy memories for Russ, but also the bitter one of his departure from Leicester in March 1996.

Leicester had just reached their third final in four years and were eyeing a second successive league title when he was shown the door. The timing still rankles. "In the end Leicester lost the league and cup, which I'm not saying had anything to do with me leaving, but I never saw the sense in *not* waiting," Russ said.

"The trouble was that we were being massively criticised for our style of play, but we were merely playing to our strengths. The board didn't like the flak and wanted to get back to the days when they had backs like Dodge, Cusworth, Woodward and Hare to play with. I've lots of positive feelings for the club, just negative ones for one or two individuals."

Russ, who thrived on the homespun environment at Leicester, then took charge of Ulster. He described the players there as "the best group I've worked with, not in talent necessarily, but attitude". However, he parted company with the club after just three months — partly because of frustration at seeing the players so infrequently and also because of a generous offer by Waterloo to become their director of rugby.

On Saturday, Russ will be in front of the television in his white shirt cheering for Ulster, whose chances of beating Colomiers in the European Cup final he rates marginally higher than his own side of an upset at Loftus Road. "It's that old boot, bite and balls cliché. We're not going to beat them on fitness, skill or tactics, but maybe on effort," Russ said.

As to the money Waterloo hoped to attract once Russ was installed, none has materialised. He was promised a £15,000 bonus for promotion — "and Father Christmas lives," he said. The caustic humour is symptomatic of rugby's ills and the fears that Russ has for the wider game if the first-division clubs ever ring-fenced an Anglo-Welsh league.

"This sport is now financially driven, but create a self-perpetuating elite and remove promotion and relegation and what incentive is there for a club like Waterloo?" he said. "After three years mismanagement, when the game's lost sight of the ball and concentrated on the action in committee rooms, even the lifelong enthusiast gets a bit jaundiced."

Not, you fancy, if the Drummers and Ulster both triumph this weekend.

Russ says that his Waterloo Drummers side will not be beaten by Wasps on Sunday through lack of effort

'Appalling' RFU faces challenge

BY DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE Rugby Football Union (RFU) has arranged a special general meeting on March 28 *for consideration of the streamlining proposals* set in train by the working party of Budge Rogers, the junior vice-president of the union; but instead they may find their own management board forcibly streamlined if the Reform Group can carry the day.

The self-styled group, established as a support body for Cliff Brittle and Fran Cotton (their president) when they both held office on the RFU management board, has accused the present board of bringing the game in England into *disrepute and seeks a vote* of no confidence.

In this respect they have merely bided their time; the group threatened to press for a special general meeting last autumn after Brittle lost the chairmanship of the RFU board but decided instead to hold a watching brief. Now their patience has run out, after seeing an embattled RFU climb down last week from confrontation with their partners on the Five Nations Committee.

"The game is in crisis," Martyn Thomas, the Reform Group chairman, said yesterday. "The RFU management board has brought the game into disrepute through the most crass management conceivable.

"Their track record is appalling. They fought the Five Nations and lost. They keep fighting the International Board and losing. They have fallen out with the European Rugby Cup. They can't even agree among themselves. They have brought the game into public ridicule and have not given the vast majority of clubs any sort of leadership."

The group believes it carries support from a significant number of clubs in the second division of the Allied Dunbar Premiership, as well as lower down the rank and file of the game, and that it will comfortably raise the 100 clubs needed to press for an SGM. Their suggestion is that their vote of no confidence in the board — from which they specifically exclude Peter Trunkfield, the RFU president — should be heard at the March 28 meeting.

Whether their chief target — Brian Baister, voted in as chairman last July — deserves such flak after six months' firefighting is a moot point, while Francis Baron, the new chief executive, has had only three months in office.

Carling voted best of British

An in-depth survey of the game — conducted on behalf of Lloyds TSB, the new sponsors of the Five Nations Championship — reveals some interesting statistics. Almost 60 per cent of those questioned felt the Five Nations was more exciting than the Tri-Nations, Wales were voted the most passionate nation in the championship, and the All Blacks the best team in the world.

The respondents were divided equally on whether professionalism had been good or bad for the game, but the results provided a glimmer of hope for Will Carling, who is contemplating a new career in Japan. He was considered, by some distance, the best British player of the last 25 years.

Back on Beeb

Rugby makes a return to the BBC network this weekend when the European Cup final between Ulster and Colomiers at Lansdowne Road is screened live by the BBC on *Grandstand* this Saturday. The following day club rugby is featured in *Sunday Grandstand* on BBC2 with extensive highlights of the Allied Dunbar Premiership clash between Wasps and Bath.

The Beeb intends to cover one of the top games every weekend for the rest of the season. Eight of the ten internationals in the Lloyds TSB Five Nations Championship are also being shown live, starting on February 6 with a double-header — Ireland v France at 2.15pm and Scotland v Wales at 4.15pm.

Referees wanted

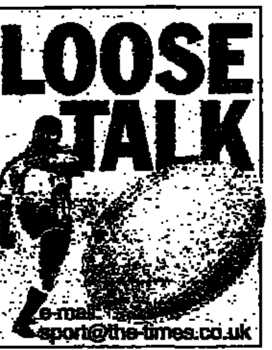
Clive Norling, the former international referee, has thrown his considerable weight behind a Welsh Rugby Union drive to attract more men in the middle. Faced with a shortage of officials, the union is appealing for those with "good eyesight" and "a calm nature" to take up the whistle.

Norling said: "Refereeing can be very lonely — no one wants to be hated. It's crucial to have good eyesight and fitness, a tough skin and a sense of humour."

Breaking story

Is Chris Walker the unluckiest rugby player in Britain? The Hull Ionians centre has just collected his third broken leg in as many years and his fourth in all.

The story really began when he broke his left leg for a second time in a match against rivals Hull two years ago. A year on he broke the same leg again, which required the insertion of a steel plate. Fast forward to this January and Walker was ready to play again. Yes, the game was against Hull, but Walker de-



cided to pull out, believing himself cursed. The Hull match was called off, with Market Rasen taking their place. Walker breathed a sigh of relief and played. Result — the same broken left leg.

"The nurse in casualty at Hull Royal Infirmary actually knew my date of birth when they brought me in," he said. Needless to say, Chris will not risk his luck or his left leg in rugby again.

Quins off key

Football club songs have tended to be excruciatingly bad, so let's hope Harlequins' rendition of *The Mighty Quin* doesn't fall into that category.

Last week the entire squad got together to record a cover version in aid of several charities, including the Richard Langhorn Trust. According to Jason "Luciano" Leonard, it won't make No 1. "Players missed cues, there wasn't much harmony and some of the guys couldn't stop laughing. It took two hours to record, but I haven't heard the finished product yet," he said. Sounds like a collector's item.

Motley brew

Who said beer had no place in the modern, clean-cut professional game? Loose Talk is indebted to CAMRA's *1999 Good Beer Guide* for the following England XV, whose names (just about) are also that of breweries. We make no apology for abusing the odd spelling or possessive. Location of the brewery is in brackets:

Paul Hull (Hull), Andy Hancock ('s) (Cardiff), Alex King and Stuart Barnes (Horsham, King and Barnes), Peter Thompson ('s) (Ashburton), Richard Sharp ('s) (Wadebridge), Malcolm Young ('s) (Wandsworth), Kevin Yates (Aspatria), Steve Brain ('s) (Cardiff), The Judge (s) (Rugby), Garath Archer ('s) (Swindon), John Fid(d)ler(s) (Old Basford, Nottinghamshire), Mick Skinner ('s) (Truro), Andy Robinson ('s) (Stockport), John Scott ('s) (Lowestoft).

Matches, of course, to be played at The Brewery Field, Bridgend.

☐ *And finally . . . don't say we aren't generous: Next week the column will be running a competition to win a pair of tickets for the sell-out Calcutta Cup game at Twickenham on February 20, courtesy of The Famous Grouse. Full details and some hugely difficult questions next week.*

MARK SOUSTER

London Scottish attract new bid

BY MARK SOUSTER

A LEADING Scottish businessman emerged yesterday as a rival contender to buy London Scottish. Brian Kennedy, 38, who made his fortune from the Weatherseal window company, has been talking to Tony Tiarks, the club owner, for several days and hopes to conclude a deal by the weekend.

Whether that means London Scottish ultimately relocating to Edinburgh is unclear. If he is successful it would mean that Bristol had failed in their attempt to take over the club in order to ensure a place in the first division of the Allied Dunbar Premiership. Malcolm Pearce, the Bristol owner, has been playing down his club's interest recently.

Sources close to Tiarks suggest the Monaco-based financier is confident that a sale will be secured by the weekend. Kennedy, whose business empire is based in Cheshire, has been keen to buy into a sports club. Last year, he failed in his attempt to take a controlling interest in Hibernian football club from Sir Tom Farmer, of KwikFit.

Kennedy is understood to have held discussions with the Scottish Rugby Union about the proposed takeover. How the union would react to a Scottish-based professional club playing in the Allied Dunbar Premiership is uncertain, but it cannot be enamoured by the prospect of having such a counter-attraction to its own domestic clubs on its doorstep.

Ken Scobie, the London Scottish president, said a move to Edinburgh would not be in the best interests of the members. He would not confirm Kennedy's identity, saying only that he had been in discussions with an interested party since Bristol's unwelcome overtures were made public.

"The interested party is doing a valuation of the situation and has had discussions with Tiarks," he said. "He is hoping to make a decision by the end of the week. While moving to Edinburgh might be in the interests of Scottish rugby, it would be as bad for London Scottish members as moving to Bristol would be."

The structure of London Scottish is such that Kennedy would be buying Tiarks's stake in London Scottish Rugby Club Ltd, the professional operation that is one of two subsidiaries of London Scottish Rugby plc, in which Tiarks has a 38 per cent stake. The second subsidiary, London Scottish Ventures, owns the club's 50 per cent leaseholding at the Richmond Athletic Ground.

FOOTBALL

McAteer's arrival cushions blow for Blackburn

By Stephen Wood

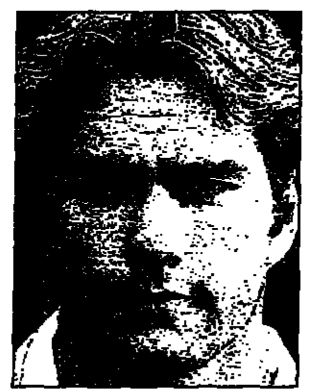
THE arrival of Jason McAteer could not have come at a better time for Blackburn Rovers. McAteer, the midfield player, yesterday completed a £4 million transfer from Liverpool while Tim Sherwood, the captain at Ewood Park, was preparing a move to Tottenham Hotspur.

McAteer, the Ireland international, had seen his career at Liverpool deteriorate in recent months and, once talks were opened, it did not take long for Brian Kidd, the Blackburn manager, to persuade McAteer that his future lay with the club.

Those same powers of persuasion failed when Sherwood was on the other side of the negotiating table. Sherwood, who has played more than 200 matches in the FA Carling Premiership for Blackburn, has made no secret of the fact that he wants a new challenge. He fell out with Roy Hodgson, the former manager at Blackburn, but then raised hopes that he would stay by reacting positively to the appointment of Kidd as successor to Hodgson.

Kidd has revitalised the club's fortunes on the field but, ultimately, it came down to the size of financial contract Blackburn were willing to offer Sherwood. Despite the fact that there are still three years to run on his present deal, club officials met with Sherwood late on Tuesday night to thrash out their final offer.

Yesterday there was confirmation that the package, believed to be worth around £25,000 a week to Sherwood, was not enough. "We cannot go any further," John Williams, the chief executive, said. Tottenham, who had one bid turned down earlier this season, are expected to make another attempt to take Sherwood back to his native South East, with Blackburn prepared to listen to offers starting at around £4 million.



McAteer: on move

Sherwood has been eager to show the supporters at Ewood Park that he is not deserting them but, approaching his 30th birthday next week, the lure of one more big-money move appears to be too strong for him to ignore. Blackburn's next match is against Spurs, at home on Saturday, and if the deal has not gone through, Sherwood is unlikely to be involved at all.

His imminent departure would be a bigger blow for Kidd if he had not clinched the signing of McAteer, a player who is expected to step straight into his new side's midfield on Saturday. The deal has been a protracted one, with Blackburn's initial offer of cash plus Sebastién Perez falling through.

Blackburn then had a cash-only offer of £3.5 million turned down by Liverpool before the clubs agreed the fee yesterday morning. Even then, there was a potential stumbling block in personal terms. McAteer last season signed a four-year deal at Anfield, guaranteeing him around £1.2 million a year. Blackburn, their position strengthened because of Sherwood's refusal to commit himself, were able to match that.

It ends a frustrating spell for McAteer. He joined Liverpool, the club he supported growing up on Merseyside, for £4.5 million from Bolton Wanderers in 1995. Although a first-team regular for two seasons, his career never took off. He has since gained a tag as a utility player, but Kidd has emphasised his desire to use him in central midfield, McAteer's favourite position.

Last season, McAteer's progress at Liverpool was hampered even further when, playing against Blackburn at Anfield, he sustained a broken leg. He had recovered by the end of the season, but the confirmation of Gerard Houllier as sole manager sounded the death knell to his time at Anfield.

Despite the rejection by Sherwood, Kidd will be happy at the way his revolution is progressing at Blackburn. He has certainly acted on the promises of Jack Walker, the club's multimillionaire owner. Walker insisted that funds would be made available to Kidd to enable him to rebuild the the squad. Since taking charge little more than a month ago, Kidd has signed Keith Gillespie, Ashley Ward, Matt Jansen and now McAteer in deals worth a total of £14.5 million.

West rejects move to Newcastle

By George Caulkin

RUUD GULLIT'S bid to sign Taribo West, the Internazionale and Nigeria centre half, ended in failure last night when the player rejected personal terms believed to be in excess of £30,000 per week. Despite Inter having agreed a £4.2 million transfer with Newcastle United, West has decided to stay and fight for his place at the San Siro stadium.

Given West's public spat with Mircea Lucescu, his side's new Romanian coach, that outcome had appeared a distant prospect when Newcastle officials travelled to Italy last week to begin negotiations for the player.

Optimism had been high, and coming on the back of the failed medical that foiled Ibrahim Ba's proposed £3 million transfer from Paris Saint-Germain last month, West's refusal to move to Tyneside is another significant blow for Gullit. The Newcastle manager remains hopeful, however, of signing Ba's team-mate, Alain Goma, 26, the defender.

Players' union officials are furious over reported remarks by Frank Leboeuf, the Chelsea defender, accusing them of having "too cosy a relationship" with the Football Association to cut down the number of matches that leading players have to play.

Gordon Taylor, the Professional Footballers' Association chief executive, was abroad on business yesterday, but a PFA spokesman said: "Gordon will be very upset if these comments are correct."

Aston Villa appeared to be edging ahead of Middlesbrough yesterday in the race to sign Juninho from Atlético Madrid when the Brazil midfield player travelled to Birmingham for talks.

Arsenal are reported to be having talks with Kaba Diawara, the Bordeaux striker, over a £3 million move.

Penalty failure concludes Repton's interest

Repton 3
Wolverhampton GS 3
(Wolverhampton win 6-5 on penalties)

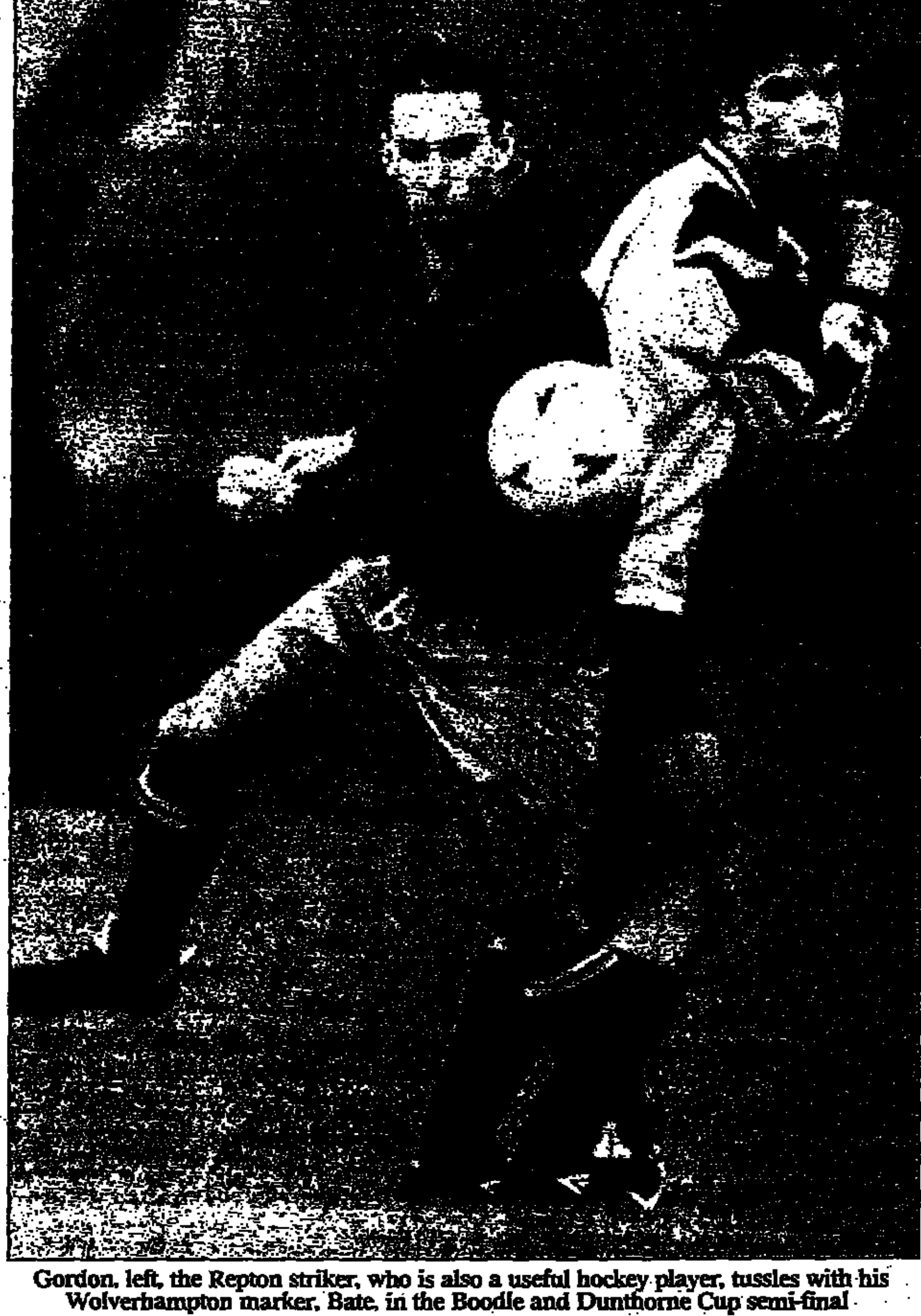
By Ivo Tennant

PENALTY-TAKING is no less unnerving for a schoolboy than a seasoned professional. After six goals and extra time, Tom Newcombe, the Repton goalkeeper, was given the responsibility of keeping his team level with Wolverhampton Grammar School in the dreaded penalty shoot-out. Alas for him, his shot struck a post and the ball slithered away into the enveloping gloaming.

Poor Newcombe. Most of Repton's pupils, it seemed, had gathered in front of the 12th-century Old Priory to see if their first XI could reach the final of the Boodle and Dunthorne Cup, the competition for independent schools that they have never won. In the final, Wolverhampton will meet either Ardingly or Hampton GS, whose semi-final was postponed yesterday.

In sporting terms, Repton is famous, among other things, for educating C. B. Fry and the fact that Derby County will be sending boys there on scholarships from next September. The advantage Wolverhampton have, is in playing football as a main sport in both of the winter terms.

Six of Repton's team were involved in a national indoor hockey competition last weekend. Jean-Paul Gordon, who fills the role of centre forward in both sports, scored the first goal after a direct run by Akpofure and, like his goalkeeper, missed a penalty in the shoot-out. Twice they took the lead against opponents who had to make four positional changes.



GREGOR McMURTRIE / PAGE ONE

Gordon, left, the Repton striker, who is also a useful hockey player, tussles with his Wolverhampton marker, Bate, in the Boodle and Dunthorne Cup semi-final

Wolverhampton, who likewise have not won this cup, began with a 3-1-4-2 formation; but were sufficiently organised to be able to toy with that. Football has become an increasingly popular sport in the independent sector and such sophistication is a tribute to the level of coaching found within it.

Wolverhampton equalised through a neat chip by Baker and took the lead after a languid run and low cross by Bolton was finished off by Turner at the far post. A header by Dan Rippon, led to extra time. He scored again, when Lancaster let the ball slip under his body.

Bate then equalised for Wolverhampton in the second half of extra time. It was a pity that a skilful, clean match had to be decided on a shoot-out, for the boys involved will remember any lapses for the rest of their lives. But there should be no stopping Repton in this or any other competition when Derby County's trainees arrive in the autumn.

REPTON (4-4-2): T Newcombe — J Nicholls, J Gordon, O Ford, R Alcop — M Jones, A Akpofure (sub: D Rippon, 71min), D Baker, A Mazola — J-P Gordon, M Rippon (sub: S Pearson, 84).

WOLVERHAMPTON GS (3-1-4-2): C Lancaster — A Bate, J Collins, S Drury — J Skedgel — R Bolton (sub: A Worthington, 88), J Carter, T Baker, A Skedgel — A Benbow, A Turner.

Referee: P Jones.

Reid must buy to close class divide

By George Caulkin

BARELY had the burger wrappers been tidied away, the bars replenished and the pitch coaxed back into verdant life than, for the second time inside 24 hours, the turnstiles at the Stadium of Light were clicking once again last night. Another big crowd, more FA Carling Premiership opposition, further proof that Sunderland are getting things appreciably right.

A day after the first team's 2-1 home defeat by Leicester City in the first leg of the Worthington Cup semi-final, a record attendance in excess of 20,000 was anticipated for the Pontins League Premier Division match with Liverpool, drawn by the prospect of free entry, or perhaps the chance to glimpse players such as Steve McManaman or Rigobert Song. Yet for all the slick public relations, the glowing new ground, the community work and the considerable success on the field, there is little sense of smug contentment. When even Bob Murray, the Sunderland chairman, says: "The only thing that we're confident of at this stage is not getting relegated," the mentality is clear; seeing does not necessarily equate with believing.

For the club have been here before — each year a new dawn that never broke — most recently in 1996, when Sunderland became champions of the Endsleigh Insurance League first division and Leicester sneaked into the play-offs and joined Peter Reid's team in promotion. It was then their paths separated and it is this that causes most grievance on Wearside.

Martin O'Neill's side have fashioned security and more from limited resources, yet on Tuesday the gap in class was yawning. That Gavin McCann's riposte to two goals from Tony Cottee was more than a touch fortunate seemed appropriate.

Reid has the financial muscle to close it, but whether he will choose to spend is far from certain. "I won't be rushed into buying," is his familiar refrain.

It is ten months ago that Middlesbrough, then second in the Nationwide League first division, spent £3.45 million on Paul Gascoigne. His three-year contract and £1.5 million salary seemed a risk, but it delivered a message of intent to rival teams. Sunderland have been sending out similar bulletins all season; perhaps a final warning is now appropriate.

SNOOKER

Walker revived by crisp break

By Phil Yates

ON ANOTHER day when the formbook proved much more reliable than of late, John Parrott was the only prominent player to be beaten by a relative unknown in the second round of the Regal Welsh Open at Cardiff International Arena yesterday.

Parrott emerged as front-runner for the £5,000 highest-break award with a 142 total clearance but scored only one point in the closing two frames of his 5-4 defeat by Lee Walker, the 1997 young player of the year, who has achieved little of note since reaching the quarter-finals of the world championship that year.

Walker stole the fifth frame on the black with a 43 clearance to lead 3-2 but subsequently faced a 4-3 deficit. However, he resolutely won the eighth frame with a run of 57 before constructing a 65 break in the decider, even though the black was out of commission throughout.

Matthew Stevens, whose 138 was removed from the top of the list of high breaks by Parrott's clinical efforts, enjoyed ample compensation. Once again he displayed a healthy level of self-assurance in rallying from 4-2 down to beat Stephen Lee 5-4.

Next on the agenda for Stevens will be Stephen Hendry. The Scot, who completed his 5-2 win over Darren Clarke with a 104 break, is impressed by Stevens and baffled by the bookmakers' ante-post decision to offer the Welshman at generous odds of 50-1 to collect the £60,000 first prize.

"It's one of the great mysteries why the bookmakers still continue to make me second or third favourite for every title and put Matthew with the outsiders," Hendry said.

Mark Williams, attempting to join the select band of players who have prevailed in consecutive tournaments, whitewashed Chris Small 5-0 while Alain Robidoux, a Canadian who arrived in Cardiff having lost 15 consecutive matches, recorded his second victory in as many days by beating Mike Dunn 5-1.

It was also a satisfying day for Stuart Bingham, the 1996 world amateur champion from Basildon, and Patrick Wallace, one of a handful of university graduates in professional snooker. They both reached a personal milestone by ensuring debut appearances in the last 16.

Bingham edged Gerard Greene 5-4 on a respotted black; Wallace, the surprise first-round conqueror of Ken Doherty, highlighted his 5-1 win over Tony Chappel with contributions of 52, 62 and 109.

FOR THE RECORD

BOWLS

WORLD TOUR RANKINGS: 1, D Gourlay (Scot) 159pts; 2, J Price (Wales) 122; 3, A E Thomson (Eng) 107; equal 4, S Rees (Wales) and H Duff (Scotland) 102; 6, M King (Eng) 98; 7, M McMahon (Aus) 83; equal 8, P Foster (Scot) and L Gillett (Eng) 73; equal 10, A Marshall (Scot) and R Brassey (NZ) 74; 12, G Robertson (Scot) 68; 13, R Weale (Wales) 62; 14, G A Smith (Eng) 60; 15, J Greenslade (Wales) 59; 16, W Richards (Eng) 58; 17, I Schuback (Aus) 56; 18, R Corsie (Scot) 53; 19, G Harlow (Eng) 52; 20, D Holt (Eng) 50; 21, A Allcock (Eng) 49; equal 22, [illegible] (Aus) and P Newman (Eng) 44; 24, J Henry (Ire) 42; 25, J Ross (Ire) 40; 26, [illegible] 36; 27, I Bond (Eng) 32; 28, S Gleeson (Aus) 30; equal 29, N Scott (Ire), N Burkett (SA) and W Jackson (Eng) 24; 32, [illegible] (Wales) 18.

CRICKET

One-day international

South Africa v West Indies

KINGSMEAD (South Africa won toss): West Indies need 275 runs to beat South Africa

SOUTH AFRICA

D J Cullinan handled ball	46
H H Gibbs c McLean b Hooper	29
L Klusener c Lara b Hooper	64
J H Kallis b Hooper	24
*W J Cronje c King b Ambrose	58
J N Rhodes c Murray b Arthurton	11
D M Benkenstein c Jacobs b Ambrose	10
†M V Boucher c Jacobs b Hooper	5
A J Hall not out	9
P L Symcox run out	5
Extras (b 3, w 2, nb 8)	13
Total (9 wkts, 50 overs)	274

S Elworthy did not bat.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-49, 2-119, 3-156, 4-192, 5-221, 6-251, 7-253, 8-261, 9-274.

BOWLING: Ambrose 10-1-31-2; King [illegible]; Hooper [illegible]; Arthurton [illegible]; McGarrell [illegible]; McLean [illegible].

WEST INDIES: S C Lara (captain), J R Murray, S Chanderpaul, C L Hooper, K L T Arthurton, R D Jacobs, K F Semple, N A M McLean, N C McGarrell, C E L Ambrose, R D King.

Umpires: W A Diedricks and D L Orchard.

Tour match

ZCU President's XI v England A

KWEKWE (second day of four): ZCU President's XI, with five first-innings wickets in hand, are 115 runs ahead of England A

ENGLAND A: First innings 257 (M G N Windows 63, A Flintoff 61)

ZCU PRESIDENT'S XI: First innings

G W Flower b Thomas	130
S [illegible] b Lewry	0
M W Goodwin c Flintoff b Thomas	13
*A Flower not out	139
D P Viljoen not out	70
G L [illegible] c Read b Cooke	1
D J [illegible]	2
Extras	27
Total (5 wkts)	362

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-4, 2-66, 3-211, 4-351, 5-358

BOWLING: Lewry [illegible]; Cooke [illegible]; Thomas [illegible]; Flintoff [illegible]; Swann [illegible]; Vaughan [illegible].

Umpires: K Kanjee and M Esat

FOOTBALL

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: Second division: Postponed: Scarborough v Leyton Orient.

FA UMBRO TROPHY: Postponed: Weston-super-Mare v Raunds Town

FIFA RANKINGS: 1, Brazil 829pts; 2, France 787; equal 3, Croatia and Italy 745; 5, Germany 742; 6, Argentina 733; 7, Czech Republic 726; 8, Holland 725; 9, Spain 703; 10, Romania 698. Other placings: 11, England 697; 26, Scotland 602; 44, Ireland 535; 67, Northern Ireland 467; 74, Wales 446

Tuesday's late results

WORTHINGTON CUP: Semi-final, first leg: Sunderland 1 Leicester 2

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: Second division: Bournemouth 3 Preston 1; Fulham 1 Oldham 0; Macclesfield 0 Millwall 2. Third division: Peterborough 1 Hull 1

AUTO WINDSCREENS SHIELD: Northern section, quarter-finals: Hartlepool 0 Lincoln City 3; Carlisle 0 Wigan 3

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Second division: Stirling 1 Queen of South 3. Third division: Cowdenbeath 0 Brechin 2; East Stirling 1 Dumbarton 2; Queen's Park 4 Stenhousemuir 1

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Challenge Cup: Second round: Chorley 0 Accrington Stanley 0; Farsley Celtic 0 Gateshead 0. Unibond first division Cup: Second round: Witton 2 Gretna 2.

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier division: Merthyr 0 Gloucester 1. League Cup: Third round: Folkestone Invicta 2 St Leonards 3

RYMAN LEAGUE: Second division: Horsham 4 Thame 2. Third division: Clapton 2 Flackwell Heath 1; Ford Utd 4 East Thurrock 2; Ware 2 Camberley 4. Puma Cup: Third round: Oxford City 2 Wealdstone 4.

FOOTBALL LEAGUE YOUTH ALLIANCE: Midland Conference: Mansfield 3 Notts County 1; Port Vale 2 Shrewsbury 1; West Brom 2 Northampton 2. North East Conference: Darlington 0 Halifax 0; Hartlepool 4 Grimsby 2. North West Conference: Tranmere 1 Oldham 3.

SMIRNOFF IRISH LEAGUE: Premier division: Glenavon 2 Portadown 2. First division: Bangor 1 Ards 0

BANKS'S BREWERY LEAGUE: Premier division: Bandon 2 Stafford 3

BASS IRISH CUP: Fifth-round replay: Duncannon Swifts 3 Carrick 4.

PONTIN'S LEAGUE: Premier division: Leeds 2 Nottm Forest 3

NORTH WESTERN TRAINS LEAGUE: First division: Mossley 3 Salford 1

ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTH LEAGUE: First division: Morpeth 2 Crook 3.

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE CUP: Third-round replay: Aldershot Town 1 Berkhamsted 0

JEWSON LEAGUE CUP: Quarter-finals: Dereham 1 Sudbury Wanderers 5; Diss 2 Histon 3

MINERVA SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS CHALLENGE TROPHY: Third round: Stony Stratford 1 Arlesey 4

SCHWEPPES ESSEX SENIOR LEAGUE: Great Wakering 0 Burnham Ramblers 3

THE TIMES FA YOUTH CUP: Third round: Gillingham 1 Leicester 3. Fourth round: Aston Villa 4 Huddersfield 1; Everton 1 Swindon 1; Ipswich 1 York 1; Scunthorpe 0 Middlesbrough 0

UHLSPORT UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: St Neots 3 N Spencer 0

UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE: First division: Whitehawk 1 Horsham 2.

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE: Premier division: Deal 3 Whitstable 1.

ITALIAN CUP: Quarter-final, second leg: Bologna 0 Juventus 1 (2-2 on agg; Bologna win on away goals).

ICE HOCKEY

SEKONDA SUPERLEAGUE: Newcastle Riverkings 2 Nottingham Panthers 3

NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Buffalo 1 Phoenix 1 (OT); Tampa Bay 1 Montreal 2; Washington 1 New York Rangers 4; New Jersey 4 Ottawa 1; New York Islanders 4 Boston 1; Philadelphia 3 Florida 3 (OT); Pittsburgh 3 Carolina 5; Nashville 1 Detroit 4; San Jose 0 St Louis 3.

ICE SKATING

PRAGUE: European figure skating championships: Women's qualifying: Group A: 1, M Butyrskaya (Russ) 0.4 factored placements; 2, V Volchkova (Russ) 0.8; 3, D Poth (Hun) 1.2; 4, J Lautowa (Austria) 1.6; 5, Y Lavrenchuk (Ukr) 2.0; 6, E Liashenko (Ukr) 2.4; 7, J Sebestyen (Hun) 2.8; 8, A Drei (Fin) 3.2; 9, Z Paurova (Slovakia) 3.6; 10, V Dymova (Cz) 4.0; 11, S M Wikstein (Fin) 4.4; 12, V Triancova (Lat) 4.8; 13, A Dimova (Bul) 5.2; 14, K Bramfeldt (Swe) 5.6; 15, U Sneskiene (Lith) 6.0. Withdrew: S Main (GB). Group B: 1, J Soldatova (Russ) 0.4; 2, V Gusmeroli (Fr) 0.8; 3, S Wojtala (Pol) 1.2; equal 4, T Szewczenko (Ger) and E-M Frize (Ger) 2.0; 6, L Hubert (Fr) 2.4; 7, J Vorobieva (Azer) 2.8; 8, S Fontana (It) 3.2; 9, M Krigsman (Holl) 3.6; 10, O Vassiljeva (Est) 4.0; 11, K Hanevold (Nor) 4.4; 12, D Demoitié (Bel) 4.8; 13, C Borghi (Switz) 5.2; 14, I Hegel (Cro) 5.6; 15, H Pajkovic (Yug) 6.0.

RUGBY UNION

ALLIED DUNBAR PREMIERSHIP: First division: Richmond 11 Leicester 23

CHELTENHAM AND GLOUCESTER CUP: First round, second leg: Orrell 7 Sale 43 (Sale win 113-10 on agg)

WELSH CHALLENGE TROPHY: Pool A: Neath 11 Canada 14. Pool B: Ebbw Vale 25 Gauteng Falcons 19; Llanelli 57 Romania 12.

CLUB MATCHES: Cambridge University 50 British Police 15; Royal Navy 5 Devon 39

SCHOOLS SPORT

FOOTBALL: Boodle and Dunthorne Cup: Semi-final: Repton 3 Wolverhampton 3 (aet, Wolves win 5-4 on pens). Heinz Ketchup Trophy: Fifth round: Barnsley 1 Burton 0.

RUGBY UNION: Daily Mail Cup: Fifth round: Lord Wandsworth Coll 12 Reigate 11.

SNOOKER

CARDIFF: Regal Welsh Open (England unless stated): First round: J White bt B Mapstone 5-1; R O'Sullivan bt N Gilbert 5-2; J Higgins (Scot) bt M Bennett (Wales) 5-1; P Ebdon bt L Griffin 5-1; M Davies bt A Murphy (N Ire) 5-2; J Swail (N Ire) bt D Dale (Wales) 5-3. Second round: M Stevens (Wales) bt S Lee 5-4; F O'Brien (Ire) bt P Hunter 5-2; A Hamilton bt W Snaddon (Scot) 5-1; S Davis bt J Johnson 5-3; P Wallace (Ire) bt A Chappel (Wales) 5-1; M Williams (Wales) bt C Small (Scot) 5-0; A Robidoux (Can) bt M Dunn 5-1; L Walker (Wales) bt J Parrott 5-4; S Bingham bt G Greene 5-4; S Hendry (Scot) bt D Clarke 5-2.

SQUASH

NEW YORK: Tournament of Champions: Quarter-finals: A Barada (Egypt) bt A Gough (Wales) 15-9, 15-10, 15-4; P Johnson (Eng) bt D Harris (Eng) 12-15, 15-12, 15-8, 9-15, 15-6; J Power (Can) bt B Davis (Aus) 15-8, 15-6, 15-5; P Nicol (Scot) bt S Parke (Eng) 15-13, 17-18, 15-12.

SRA NATIONAL LEAGUE: Group A: Hallamshire 3 Manchester Northern 2 (Hallamshire names first: P Lord bt M Barnett 15-14, 15-9, 7-15, 12-15, 15-10; A Toes lost to P Whitlock 7-15, 15-12, 13-15, 11-15; N Mathew bt Y Abbas 15-11, 15-5, 15-2; N Wall bt P Foster 15-13, 2-15, 15-8, 1-15, 15-9; C Beaumont lost to S Horner 1-9, 1-9, 1-9). Capital One Nottingham 4 TSM Duffield 1 (Capital One Nottingham names first: L Beachill bt P Hargrave 15-5, 15-8, 15-9; J Nicolle bt K White 11-15, 15-7, 15-7, 16-7; M Oxley bt P Williams 15-14, 15-8, 15-7; N Redington lost to P Jones 5-15, 8-15, 5-15; N Granger bt J Thacker 9-1, 8-4, 9-3). Group B: UK Packaging 4 Ashursts Loughborough 1 (UK Packaging names first: J Wellings bt S Taylor 15-10, 15-10, 15-12; C Tomlinson bt D Walsh 10-15, 15-10, 15-10, 15-9; S Cowie bt A Stevenson 15-10, 15-11, 15-6; L Jennett lost to S Richardson 15-12, 10-15, 11-15, 9-15; L Charmon bt J Tranfield 9-1, 9-2, 9-0). Bishop's Stortford 3 Potters Bar 2 (Bishop's Stortford names first: J Boretat bt I Higgins 15-8, 15-12, 14-15, 17-16; S Handley lost to J Davis 15-8, 12-15, 6-15, 10-15; B Ford bt P Carter 15-12, 11-15, 15-10, 16-17, 17-14; D Selby lost to P Barker 11-15, 5-15, 6-15; R Macree bt S Wright 9-7, 5-9, 5-9, 9-3, 9-7). Group C: UniS Guildford 4 Lee-on-Solent 1 (UniS Guildford names first: S Meads bt N Dugan 15-12, 16-11, 15-9; J Russell bt D Watson 15-4, 15-5, 15-4; R Norman bt C Ewins 15-8, 15-11, 4-15, 15-7; A Grant bt J Russell 15-13, 15-7, 15-6; L Stephens lost to D Lloyd-Walter 3-9, 2-9, 1-9). Devon and Exeter 5 UWIC Cardiff 0 (Devon and Exeter names first: H Stiff bt G Tippings 15-5, 15-11, 15-6; D Bradbury bt P Allen 9-15, 5-15, 15-12, 15-11, 15-7; M Hopkins bt S Evans 9-15, 15-10, 15-8, 15-13; A Stait bt M Hughes 15-6, 15-3, 15-4; T Malik bt J Hodkinson 9-0, 9-3, 9-4).

TABLE TENNIS

OSTRAVA, Czech Republic: European League: First division: Czech Republic 4 England 0 (Czech Republic win 6-4 on agg).

POOLS DIVIDENDS

BRITTENS: Treble chance: 23pts £334.00, 22 £6.25, 21 £1.00. Four draws: £14.50. Five aways: £26.10. Eight homes: £2.60.

LITTLEWOODS: Treble chance: 23pts £101,308.15, 22 £642.10, 21 £32.15, 20 £6.30. Half-time: 22pts £3,007.50. Four draws: £35.30. Nine homes: £1,363.50. Five aways: £238.95.

VERNONS: Treble chance: 23pts £15,923.90, 22 £327.05, 21 £29.40.

ZETTERS: Treble chance: 23pts £3,122.10, 22 £26.20, 21 £1.35, 20 £0.35. Four aways: £5.00. Eight homes: £36.00. Four draws: £20.20. All-draws treble chance: 22pts £30.20, 22 £1.00. Lucky numbers: 28 8 19 13 32 29

FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 7.30

FA UMBRO TROPHY: Third round: Havant and Waterlooville v Worcester

RYMAN LEAGUE: Vandanel Trophy: Third round: Banstead v Epsom and Ewell.

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE: Premier division: Crockenhill v Erith.

MINERVA SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS LEAGUE: Premier division: Berkhamsted v Waltham Abbey. Challenge Trophy: Third round: Potters Bar Town v Toddington

OTHER SPORT

ICE HOCKEY: Sekonda Superleague: Manchester Storm v London Knights (7.0)

IN BRIEF

Yorkshire showdown in prospect

■ **BOXING:** Naseem Hamed is ready to put his world title at stake against another Yorkshire-based boxer, Paul Ingle, of Scarborough. The World Boxing Organisation featherweight showdown has been pencilled in for Manchester's MEN Arena on April 10. Ingle rejected a bout with Hamed earlier this month but said an improved offer of more than £300,000 was "too good to refuse". His promoter, Frank Maloney, confirmed yesterday that a deal was all but concluded.

■ **MOTOR RACING:** The scramble for seats is still not over in Formula One with just six weeks to go before the first grand prix of the season. Mika Salo emerged yesterday as the biggest potential loser, with Arrows considering ditching the Finn for two drivers who can pay their own way. Toranosuke Takagi and Pedro de la Rosa could both bring substantial sponsorship to the team, which earlier this month was saved by a £70 million cash injection by a consortium led by a Nigerian prince, Malik Ado Ibrahim.

■ **BOWLS:** David Gourlay, who lost to Alex Marshall in the final of the world indoor singles championship last week, has replaced Hugh Duff at the top of the World Bowls Tour ranking list, while Marshall gains a place in the top 16 for the first time. Duff drops to fourth place, behind John Price and Andy Thomson. Tony Allcock, Richard Corsie and Ian Schuback have slipped out of the leading group.

CRICKET

Test rivals stay calm on eve of hostilities

Richard Hobson in Madras hopes that India and Pakistan can combine to produce a positive series

Sunil Gavaskar *once* suggested that every Indian possessed a vocabulary of at least four words: "You must beat Pakistan." The anecdote will strike a chord with Wasim Akram. *On the flight from* Lahore to Delhi last week, a stewardess whispered to the Pakistan captain: "Win it for our people."

The difference between victory and defeat is the contrast *between deification and disso*ciation. In the past, the fear of failure has generated some of the dullest cricket in the history of the game. If Wasim and Mohammad Azharuddin, the India captain, are prepared to *compromise* that *fear* in pursuit of glory, the three-Test series that begins at the Chidambaram Stadium today will be memorable for more than historic reasons.

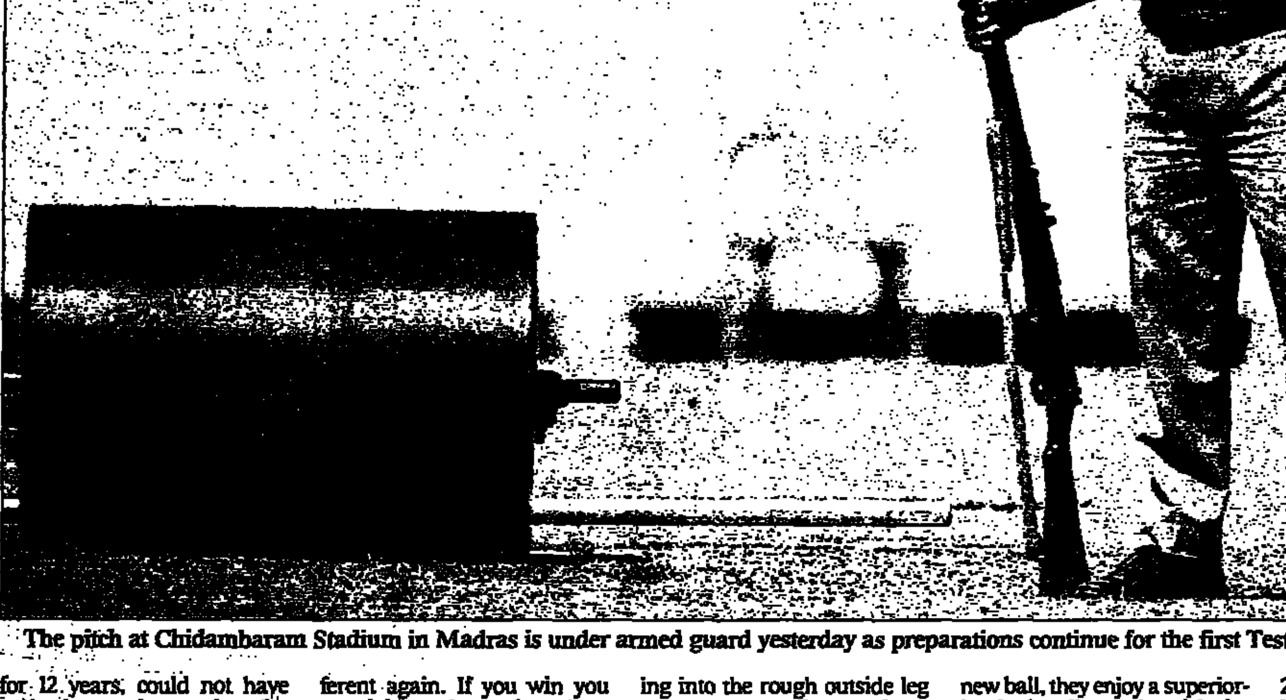
A record of 15 draws in the past 16 meetings tells a story of *slow, stultifying pitches and* negative tactics. However, as Raj Singh, the president of the Board of Cricket Control for India, said yesterday, the growth of limited-overs cricket since the last meeting, in 1989-90, *has nurtured* an instinct to attack. With Azharuddin suggesting that the pitch will turn sharply, there is reason to feel optimistic about a positive outcome.

The form of both countries *is poor*. Pakistan, besmirched by allegations of match-fixing and riddled with internal divisions, have lost unsurprisingly to Australia and embarrassingly to Zimbabwe on home soil. India returned recently from defeat against New Zealand. Yet Pakistan are a better touring team and India have not lost a home series since 1987.

Furthermore, it is easy to think that this series, the first between the countries in India for 12 years, could not have arrived at a better time for Pakistan. The contempt held by certain players towards each other pales alongside the inherent determination to crush India.

Tight security, which includes snipers overlooking their base at the Taj Coromandel Hotel, has contributed towards fostering unity. Yesterday, in a noble public relations exercise, players visited a hospital for sick children.

"The security was unsettling at the beginning but the guards have been flexible," Wasim said. "We spent two weeks in a training camp in Karachi after playing Zimbabwe and the fact that this is such an important series has glued the players together. My job is to make sure they take pride in themselves and fight to their best for the people back home. People think the Ashes series is the most important, but this is something different again. If you win you are right up there. If you lose, the people do not want to know you."



The pitch at Chidambaram Stadium in Madras is under armed guard yesterday as preparations continue for the first Test match against Pakistan

Tendulkar takes part in India's practice session yesterday

Wasim is beginning a fourth stint as captain and Cammie Smith, the former West Indies batsman who is the match referee for the series, remarked that the experience of Wasim and Azharuddin will help to retain a degree *of relative calm* in a highly charged atmosphere.

> 'This is such an important series it has glued the players together'

The view of Azharuddin, that Wasim holds the key to Pakistan's chances, is shared by Sachin Tendulkar, now unquestionably the finest batsman in the world. He has drafted in left-arm fast bowlers from local clubs and instructed them to bowl short in the nets to simulate Wasim's threat. Last year, Tendulkar employed leg spinners bowling into the rough outside leg stump to replicate Shane Warne and proceeded to dominate against Australia.

His innings of 155 not out on a turning pitch here last March was judged by those who follow India as being among the best of his 17 Test centuries. Indeed, the middle order, comprising Dravid, Azharuddin, Ganguly and himself, has been the most prolific in the world over the past two years. Any vulnerability lies at the top of the order, where Laxman is likely to be partnered by Sandagoppan Ramesh, who could make his debut on his home ground.

While Pakistan, too, have an obvious weakness against the new ball, they enjoy a superiority in bowling. The risk for India is that Saqlain Mushtaq and Mushtaq Ahmed, if he recovers from a back problem, will be as likely to exploit conditions as their own spinners. Kumble does not turn the ball as sharply as Mushtaq, while Sunil Joshi, the slow left-arm bowler, is seen as better-suited to the one-day game. This *might lead to a* recall for the off spin of Harbhajan Singh, 19, whose action was modified by Fred Titmus after concerns expressed by the International Cricket Council last year. Although Singh has never been no-balled for throwing, Titmus, the former England spin bowler, recommended minor changes in the delivery stride to remove the possible appearance of throwing.

For all the rivalry, just 20,000 of the 50,000 tickets had been sold by yesterday evening. Organisers believe that the slow process of gaining admission — the consequence of searching everybody at the gates — has proved prohibitive.

Asked to predict the result, Wasim said diplomatically: "Let the best team win." It is the closest that anyone will come to impartiality in the *tense five days ahead.*

INDIA (from): M Azharuddin (captain), V V S Laxman, S Ramesh, R Dravid, S R Tendulkar, S C Ganguly, N R Mongia, J Srinath, B K V Prasad, A Kumble, H H Singh, S B Joshi, L Shukla, H H Kanitkar

PAKISTAN (from): Wasim Akram (captain), Saeed Anwar, Mohammad Naved, Ijaz Ahmed, Yousuf Youhana, Salim Malik, *Inzamam-ul-Haq, Moin Khan, Saqlain Mushtaq*, Azhar Mahmood, Mushtaq Ahmed, Shoaib Akhtar, Wajahatullah Wasti

LINKS

WEBSITE: www-uk.cricket.org

TELEVISION: First ONdigital (channel 33), 4.30am (live), 9pm (highlights)

Cullinan dismissed by hand of fate

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

DARYLL Cullinan, the South African opening batsman, became only the second player in one-day international cricket to be given out "handled the ball" during the third match of the one-day series against West Indies in Durban yesterday.

The home team made 274 for nine in 50 overs after winning the toss at Kingsmead, with half-centuries from Lance Klusener and Hansie Cronje, the captain.

Cullinan had made 46 before playing a ball from the *left-arm slow bowler, Keith* Arthurton, hard into the ground. It bounced straight up and, as it came down, Cullinan took his right hand off the bat and caught it.

Although it did not seem *likely that the ball would pose* any danger to the stumps, Brian Lara, the West Indies captain, appealed and Cullinan was given out by Dave Orchard, the umpire from South Africa.

Orchard brought into effect Law 33, which states that a batsman shall be given out on appeal "if he wilfully touches the ball while in play with the hand not holding the bat, unless he does so with the consent of the opposite side".

It is one of cricket's most unusual dismissals and the only previous batsman to fall in the same way in a limited-overs international match was Mohinder Amarnath, of India, in a match against Australia in the 1985-86 season.

On a hard pitch, South *Africa batted solidly as the* West Indies bowlers laboured in hot weather.

Klusener, sent in as a pinch-hitter at No 3, made 64 off 74 balls while Cronje was in sparkling form, hitting 58 off 42 *balls with three fours* and three sixes.

Carl Hooper, the West Indies off-spin bowler, took four wickets for 52 but Curtly Ambrose was the most impressive of the bowlers, taking two for 31.

Scoreboard, page 48

England's enigma finds his role

Michael Henderson says Graeme Hick is now indispensable in the one-day side

Sometimes it just clicks. Graeme Hick has been playing interna*tional cricket since the* day in May 1991 that he qualified as English, and for much of the last eight years he has been tossed about so mercilessly on a sea of heightened expectation that he despaired of ever *spotting dry land.*

Six times he has been picked for the Test team. Six times he has been dropped. He has made 105 first-class hundreds, and is not trusted to bat in his familiar position of No 3. Hopes have been *raised*, dashed, raised once more, and seemed to evaporate in a pool of utter misery when he made a century against the Sri Lankans at the Oval last August and, six days later, was excluded from the tour party for Australia.

Test security for Hick is still a long way off but in one-day cricket he is making himself indispensable. Hick is having a terrific time in the triangular tournament with Australia and Sri Lanka, having made three hundreds in the last four *matches* after a poor start in Brisbane. Suddenly there is colour in his cheeks again.

Say what you like about Hicky — and those of us who are not completely bowled over by his Test record reserve our rights — but nobody likes *to see a soul in torment*, and for much of his time in the side that has been the case. One can sense it in the recognition he gets from crowds, that people want him to fulfil something of that vast potential, to succeed.

He has always been popular with team-mates. Alec Stewart made that plain after Hick's latest hundred had narrowly failed to deliver victory against Australia in Adelaide. The man he and other players knew in the dressing-room, he said, was not the man the public might know. They enjoyed his company, his cricket sense, and the runs he makes.

Stewart is not right to call him a "world-class player" because world-class players make hundreds against the finest bowlers in the world in difficult Test matches, and Hick has done that only once, in South Africa in 1995. What he has, or had, was the ability to become a world-class batsman, indeed a world-conquering batsman, but if he is going *to do that now, he will have* to make up a lot of ground very quickly.

It is more likely that he will earn international glory in limited-overs cricket, which means that the World Cup this *summer is his oyster.* He has the talent, and he will have the opportunity, batting in the position he favours.

Since England discarded the *muddle-headed* policy of sending in Ealham at No 3, *Hick* has shown them how sensible it was to revert to the tried and trusted method of having somebody in that position who can bat his way through the first 15 overs, and beyond.

His first hundred in this competition, against Australia at Sydney, was a really excellent effort. Those he made at Adelaide, each time in a losing cause, regrettably, were possibly finer. Shane Warne needed little prompting to describe the one on Australia Day as "superb".

Hick in scintillating form

Hick takes a philosophical *view of it all, partly because he* doesn't know how the land lies with regard to a Test place. Balanced against his fine attacking batting in the second innings at Perth, and the runs he made at Melbourne were those joint *failures* at Adelaide, the crucial third Test that England surrendered with an abysmal display of batting.

"It has come together pretty well over the past few days", *he said. "I have made a bit* more of an effort to play myself in. In the past I have made good runs in one-day cricket and then not made the Test side, for some reason. At the moment I am feeling confident *in both forms of the game.*"

The way he carted Muralitharan into the trees beyond the mid-wicket boundary at Adelaide testified to his confidence. This is one-day cricket, not to be confused with the sort that makes real demands on players, but games have *still to be won. Perhaps David* Lloyd, the England coach, should get hold of Hick some time in the next month and put it to him straight.

"Look here, Hicky. You'll never have a better chance of making a name for yourself. You haven't achieved all that you might have, or all that you want, but forget about that. Go out and smash the ball to all parts, as hard and as often as you can. If it doesn't come off, no matter. Nobody will hold you to account."

That would be true. If Eng*land are to win the World* Cup, then Hick and Gough are the men who can do most to bring it off.

One man is cocksure, full of swagger and in the form of his life. The other shows a less cer*tain face to the world, having* seen how cruelly it can deceive the trusting. But he's changing. The evidence is there for all to see.

Cork talks planned

DERBYSHIRE have withdrawn the deadline they set Dominic Cork, left, for informing them whether he intended to remain as *their captain*. Trevor Bowring, *who was elected chairman of the* club yesterday after an acrimonious annual meeting, is intent on preventing an extraordinary general meeting taking place.

Cork had been given until noon yesterday to inform the club of his intentions, but refused to put anything in writing. He reiterated that he will not continue unless he is given the authority he feels he is due as captain. Bowring said he had asked Les Elliott, who has withdrawn his resignation from the committee, to hold talks with Cork.

Ranatunga faces hearing

FROM MICHAEL HENDERSON IN PERTH

ARJUNA RANATUNGA, the captain of Sri Lanka, who has been charged with breaching the code of conduct laid down by the International Cricket Council, will be dealt with today at a disciplinary hearing in Perth. Peter van der Merwe, the ICC match referee, adjourned the initial hearing in Adelaide on Tuesday after Ranatunga' s lawyers disputed aspects of the evidence against him.

At the time van der Merwe said: "Certain points were raised by Ranatunga's legal *representatives, which I re*ferred back to London for advice." Now that the ICC seems to have clarified the position van der Merwe would appear to be in a position to take appropriate action. The maxi*mum sentence he can impose* is a six-match ban.

Ranatunga, who tried to lead his team off the field in Adelaide after the umpire, Ross Emerson, called Muttiah Muralitharan for throwing, and later adopted an insulting and bullying manner towards Emerson, faces five charges covered by the ICC regulations. Broadly speaking they include being responsible for the behaviour of his players, and respecting the umpires' decisions.

Emerson, who stayed on in Adelaide to attend the hearing on Tuesday, was in the end *not required to give evidence.* It became clear later that he had been off work for eight works, apparently suffering from a "stress-related condition", and has since been stood down from the rest of *this triangular series by the* Australian Cricket Board.

Alec Stewart, the England captain, and Graeme Hick, who was batting when Ranatunga tried to *take his team* off, will appear as witnesses. Van der Merwe has also summoned several Sri Lanka players to attend, including Muralitharan, the off spin bowler in the eye of the storm.

Sri Lanka won the game by one wicket, when Muralitharan hit the winning run in the last over, but it will not be remembered for the often brilliant quality of play. Stewart, who was heard telling Ranatunga that his behaviour had been appalling, called it "the least enjoyable game of *cricket I have ever been in*volved in".

The Sri Lanka management would make no comment yesterday as they trained at the WACA. Aravinda de Silva, their star bats*man and vice-captain, is ex*pected to return to play his first game in the tournament, having recovered from a groin strain.

Flowers bloom as bowlers wilt

FROM THRASY PETROPOULOS IN KWEKWE

KWEKWE (second day of four): ZCU President's XI, with five first-innings wickets in hand, lead England A by 115 runs

IF THE message had not sunk in fully on the opening day, England A were left in no doubt yesterday that their inability to make the most of sound batting conditions has *left them badly exposed.* On a day of sapping heat at the Kwekwe Sports Club, all the bowlers were given a lesson in application by the President's XI. Where Matthew Windows, Andrew *Flintoff* and Graeme Swann were out to headstrong strokes when well set, Grant and Andy Flower rarely lapsed in concentration, each scoring a century.

With Dirk Viljoen's promising *contribution*, the home side have secured a lead from which they should dictate terms. Already, England A will have to bat their way out of trouble in their second innings if they are to avoid their first defeat in a first-class match for six years. It took a *breathtaking* catch by Windows — running back from square leg and lunging, to hold a mistimed pull off Dean Cosker — to dismiss Murray Goodwin. But the Flower brothers, Grant, fortuitously at first, and Andy, never less than solidly, put the conditions into context by taking 125 runs off the *next* 32 overs.

Grant Flower's cheeky brace of reverse sweeps for four disrupted Swann's rhythm *as early as the off spin*ner's first over. Grant Flower was eventually undone by Darren Thomas, playing on to a ball of extra bounce, but 21-year-old Viljoen took his place with a composed 70. Fortunate perhaps to survive a clear edge to Flintoff that was called no-ball, it took a direct hit from Jason Lewry at mid-wicket to see the back of him.

Cosker made a late breakthrough, deceiving Greg Lamb through the air for Chris Read to complete the stumping, but Andy Flower remained undefeated.

Scoreboard, page 48

TENNIS: OLD RIVAL OVERWHELMED IN AUSTRALIAN OPEN AMID BARE MINIMUM OF ETIQUETTE

Seles vents strong feelings

Seles displays her determination in a double-handed return during her decisive defeat of Graf in Melbourne yesterday. Photograph: William West

FROM JULIAN MUSCAT, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT, IN MELBOURNE

YOU could watch Monica Seles every day for a month and still be intrigued by this extraordinary woman, with her extraordinary past, whose like will never again walk the world's courts.

Seles positively crushed Steffi Graf in the Australian Open here yesterday. She inflicted on the proud German a defeat so complete that Graf could not remember the like of it. From 4-2 up in the first set, Graf lost 11 of the next 13 games — including eight in a row — as Seles pounded down her metronomic groundstrokes from the strings of her oversized racket. She triumphed 7-5, 6-1 in 73 minutes.

This quarter-final was expected from the moment the draw was cast here two weeks ago. Graf against Seles, might against power, grace against force. Graf established an early lead, after which Seles hunted her down. Point by point, shot by shot, Seles remorselessly closed down on Graf. She ultimately drew level, reached out a paw and metaphorically severed her prey in half.

"I played OK until 4-3, but then I totally lost my momentum." Graf, still disorientated by the experience, reflected some 20 minutes after the match. "I couldn't put a ball in the court."

The two have duelled too many times for Graf to be surprised by Seles's onslaught. "For some reason, I didn't go into this tournament with enough confidence," she said. "I don't know why that was." These are strange thoughts from Graf, who played some outstanding tennis, beating both the Williams sisters, in Sydney two weeks ago.

Perhaps Seles, now a leaner individual than when beaten by Martina Hingis at Flushing Meadows in September, is approaching her very best form. Certainly Graf, 29, is not the force of old. No player can expose an opponent's limitations quite like Seles. She may have been responsible for Graf's state of disarray.

A little cameo in the second game suggested that we were poised to witness yet another memorable confrontation between two women who once dominated the game. After a long and strength-sapping rally, which had Seles scampering furiously after a series of trademark Graf forehands, the German moved in to finish the point — but she could not.

Twice Seles retrieved balls that looked like winners. On the third she missed narrowly with a passing shot at full stretch, prompting Graf into the faintest hint of a smile at her opponent's obduracy. It was a smile of recognition: one that told of countless previous rallies of similar substance.

RESULTS

MEN

SINGLES: Quarter-finals: Y Kafelnikov (Russ) bt T Martin (US) 6-2, 7-6, 6-2; T Haas (Ger) bt V Spadea (US) 7-6, 7-5, 6-3.

DOUBLES: Quarter-finals: E Ferreira (SA) and R Leach (US) bt P Galbraith (US) and P Haarhuis (Holl) 7-5, 6-2, 6-4; J Bjorkman (Swe) and P Rafter (Aus) wo G Kuerten (Br) and N Lapentti (Ec).

WOMEN

SINGLES: Quarter-finals: M Hingis (Switz) bt M Pierce (Fr) 6-3, 6-4; M Seles (US) bt S Graf (Ger) 7-5, 6-1.

DOUBLES: Quarter-final: L Davenport (US) and N Zvereva (Bela) bt Y Basuki (Indo) and A Mauresmo (Fr) 6-2, 6-3. **Semi-final:** M Hingis (Switz) and A Kournikova (Russ) bt L Raymond (US) and R Stubbs (Aus) 6-3, 5-7, 6-4.

MIXED DOUBLES

QUARTER-FINALS: P Albano (Arg) and M Bollegraf (US) bt N Kulti (Swe) and M Oremans (Holl) 6-7, 7-5, 6-4; D Adams (SA) and M de Swardt (SA) bt D McPherson (Aus) and R McQuillan (Aus) 6-4, 6-4.

BOYS

SINGLES: Second round: D Merafiole (Aus) bt M Hilton (GB) 6-3, 4-6, 6-4.

GIRLS

SINGLES: Second round: H Collin (GB) bt M Gerards (Holl) 4-6, 7-5, 6-2.

That standard would not be maintained as the match progressed. As errant as Graf was, Seles was increasingly unplayable. Her backhand blistered the paint denoting the court's boundaries. Her short, choppy backswing contrasted sharply with Graf's gliding forehand, yet there is a haunting beauty about Seles in full flow. To watch her establish her destructive rhythm can chill you to the bone.

Another unsettling sight was the way the two players greeted each other at the contest's conclusion. There was no eye contact, no smile, no acknowledgement; only the bare minimum required by the game's etiquette. Their fleeting handshake, followed by Seles's determination to dismantle the notion of their rivalry, told of the sad, sorry, personal history between them.

While tennis fans clamour for their on-court collisions, Seles implied that she would prefer it if they never met again. Wasn't this like old times: Steffi and Monica, here at Flinders Park? "Not for me," came the blunt riposte. "I just went in there and played ball." Is there still something special, though, about playing Steffi? "I get a special feeling when I play any top player," Seles said.

It was, of course, a fan of Graf who stabbed Seles in the back during a changeover in Hamburg six years ago. Any meeting between Seles and Graf thus precipitates the retelling of that episode, an episode that Seles strives hard to forget.

Seles is trapped in a vicious circle: what redemption awaits her is to be found out on the courts, which, by necessity, requires the occasional meeting with Graf. Seles, seeded No 6, was back on court in the early hours this morning for her semi-final with Martina Hingis, who accounted for Mary Pierce, seeded No 7, 6-3, 6-4. The champion, Hingis caught Pierce on a day when consistency off the ground proved a problem.

Tommy Haas, of Germany, advanced to his first grand-slam semi-final when he got the better of Vince Spadea, of the United States, in straight sets. Remarkably, Spadea, No 44 in the world, was by some distance the highest-ranked opponent to confront Haas, 20, in his five victories here to date.

Haas next plays Yevgeny Kafelnikov, of Russia, the sole seed among the four semi-finalists. Kafelnikov, seeded No 10, disposed of Todd Martin, of the United States, in straight sets to establish himself as the man most likely to land the title here on Sunday.

In the girls' junior tournament, Hannah Collin, of Surrey, posted a spirited 4-6, 7-5, 6-2 victory over Michelle Gerards, of Holland, to reach the third round.

WEBSITE: www.ausopen.org
TELEVISION:
Eurosport, 4.30pm (highlights)
BBC 2, 5pm (highlights)

ICE SKATING

Medal hopefuls have to make early impact

FROM ANGELA COURT IN PRAGUE

WHEN is a qualifying event not a qualifying event? When it is part of a figure-skating championship and counts towards the final result. That is the joke doing the rounds here at the European figure skating championships, but not everyone is laughing.

Yesterday, 33 women divided into two groups and skated their free programmes in what were called "qualifying free skating". With 15 from each group progressing to the short programme tomorrow, just three skaters were eliminated. For the 30 remaining, the performance yesterday will count for 20 per cent of the final score — and some have been left with a lot to do if they are to get a medal.

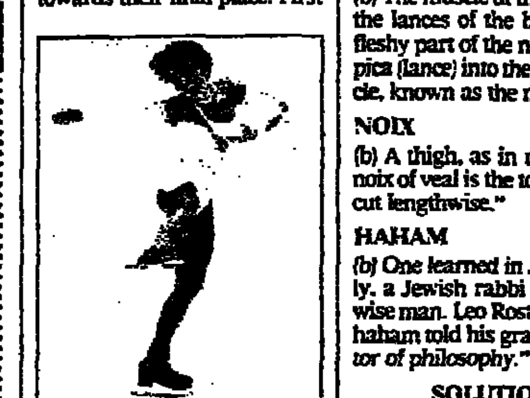
Leading contenders such as Tanja Szewczenko, of Germany, and Elena Liashenko, of Ukraine, could not afford to go through the motions because, from this season, solo skaters in International Skating Union (ISU) championships are required to turn in three performances that contribute towards their final place. First they skate the free programme, then the short, worth 30 per cent, and then do the free again — when it is worth the remaining 50 per cent.

Sally-Anne Stapleford, chairwoman of the ISU's figure skating technical committee, said: "Previously skaters would aim to qualify without putting much effort into the performance, but now this section counts, everyone has good reason to do their best. It raises the level of the competition."

Maria Butryskaya, of Russia, the champion, and Julia Soldotova, her compatriot, won their individual groups. Szewczenko and Liashenko could manage only fourth and sixth in their respective groups.

After four years with no female British representative in the final of this event, it was hoped that Stephanie Main would break the pattern, but she is suffering from influenza and withdrew yesterday, having taken no part.

Elena Berezhnaya, and Anton Sikharulidze, the pairs champions, are also under the weather with flu symptoms and withdrew from the pairs event last night.



Soldatova: group winner

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 45

HESVAN
(b) The eighth month of the Jewish ecclesiastical year and the second month of the civil year, corresponding to parts of October and November. Also formerly called Bul. "The perfect year has 355 days, and is when the months of Hesvan and Kislev have each 30 days."

MORILLO
(b) The muscle at the back of the bull's neck, one of the targets for the lances of the bullfighters. In Spanish the word means the fleshy part of the neck of an animal. "The picadors must place a pica (lance) into the rear part of the toro's long hump of neck muscle, known as the morillo or cerviguillo."

NOIX
(b) A thigh, as in noix de veau. In French, literally a nut. "The noix of veal is the topside (rump), the fleshy upper part of the leg, cut lengthwise."

HAHAM
(b) One learned in Jewish law. A wise man or savant. Specifically, a Jewish rabbi among Sephardic Jews. Hebrew for wise, a wise man. Leo Rosten, The Joys of Yiddish, 1968: "A proud young haham told his grandmother that he was going to become a doctor of philosophy."

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE
1. Rh5+! Kxh5; 2. Qh7 checkmate.

TELEVISION CHOICE

Keeping it in the family

Family Confidential
Channel 5, 8.30pm

The series on "family life in Britain today" continues to unearth the sort of families most of us never come across. A Lancashire wedding is the subject of the latest film, of Stuart (21) to Sharon (25). They are stepbrother and stepsister and have grown up together for most of their lives. The brother-sister relationship turned into something more three years ago and they have a son. She also has two boys from previous relationships. It sounds complicated, not to say scary, but they insist they are in love and are prepared to work even harder than usual to make it work. The signs are not all favourable. It is only 10.30 on Stuart's stag night and Sharon is ringing the pub to demand he comes home. When he finally knocks on the front door, at 11.45pm, she refuses to let him in.

Meet the Ancestors
BBC2, 9.00pm

On a windswept barley field near Kirkwall in Orkney a farmer's tractor dislodges the roof slab of an underground tomb whose contents have not been touched for 5,000 years. For Julian Richards, the archaeologist who hosts this quietly gripping series, Orkney is a long way from his home in Dorset but he knows a good find when hears about one. There follows the usual painstaking detective work, as experts from academe and Strathclyde Police poke among bones and fragments of skulls and piece together as coherent a story about their owners as modern science can give us. Even though the remains are too decayed for the DNA to have survived, the evidence points to a woman of about 30 and two children. An unusual bump on the back of the woman's head takes the investigation far beyond Orkney.

Horizon: From Here to Infinity
BBC2, 9.30pm

The two biggest questions about our Universe are how it started and how it will end. This film considers the second, setting out the latest scientific thinking on whether the universe will expand to infinity, contract in a cosmic crunch or coast indefinitely on the verge of collapse. The experts claim they have the answer, based on a study of supernovae. Two teams of competing astronomers are convinced they have the means of tracking these dying stars and by doing so can solve the mystery of the cosmos. Saul Perlmutter, a young Californian physicist, made the early running but rival observers who initially scorned his method have, ironically, since adopted it. The work of both teams has incidentally revealed a mysterious force which has revised traditional ideas about the nature of the Universe.

A local artist demonstrates his skills in *Mad about Monet* (BBC1, 10.20pm)

Mad About Monet
BBC1, 10.20pm

Some may feel that this film tells them too little about Monet's art and too much about the hairdresser who runs a Monet salon in Burton upon Trent or the absurd prices which the paintings now fetch at auction. A Sotheby's man admits that he cannot look at Monet's poplar trees without seeing them as a dollar sign. The excuse for presenting Monet as a phenomenon is that he is one, not just an artist but a box-office attraction, as the Royal Academy is discovering. Richard Cork of *The Times* is left to wonder if the world has gone Monet-mad. But among the tangential fripperies the programme offers a useful bluffer's trip through the life and career, with insights into the creation of the wonderful Giverny garden. *Peter Waymark*

RADIO CHOICE

Barry Tooks Comedy Classics: The Goon Show
Radio 2, 9pm

I do not normally give space to retreads but Barry Took is choosing some brilliant comedy for this series, though I doubt it will produce anything better than this episode of The Goon Show, called *The Siege of Fort Night*, from 1958. The Goons have long been the shortest answer to those who think that alternative comedy was invented about 20 minutes ago; this classic was an alternative to every kind of comedy that had gone before. Tonight's episode has an army setting, offering ex-trooper turned scriptwriter Spike Milligan several opportunities for revenge. The story, strangely absent from most military histories, concerns a waterproof gas stove which has to be smuggled into Fort Night using electrified Mongolian bagpipes.

The Hardest Game
Radio 5 Live, 7.30pm

What is it about Chris Eubank that provides him with a large army of adoring fans, faced by an army at least as large that would not care if Eubank never stepped in another ring? The supercilious manner may be a contributing factor, together with the (seemingly) absurd fashion posturing. But this series by Harry Carpenter, the recently retired BBC boxing correspondent, has been good at getting beyond such superficial matters and tonight's programme elicits some interesting and even modest thoughts, not least about Eubank's regrets relating to some fight incidents. Eubank is frank about his carefully cultivated image, but admits to being upset when the media protrays a different image of him. **Peter Barnard**

RADIO 1 (BBC)

6.30am Zoe Ball **9.00** Simon Mayo **12.00pm** Kevin Greening **2.00** Mark Radcliffe **4.00** Chris Moyles **5.45** Newsbeat **6.00** Clive Warren **8.00** The Evening Session **10.00** Trade Update **10.10** John Peel **12.00am** Andy Kershaw **2.00** Emma B **4.00** Scott Mills

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Sarah Kennedy **7.30** Wake Up to Wogan **9.30** Ken Bruce **12.00pm** Jimmy Young **2.00** Ed Stewart **5.05** Johnnie Walker **7.00** David Allan **8.00** Paul Jones **9.00** Barry Took's Comedy Classics: The Goon Show. Last in series. See Choice (6/6) **9.30** Comedy Showcase: Redeeming Brian. (3/6) **10.00** Melly Talks Jazz (2/6) **10.30** Richard Allinson **12.00am** Katrina Leskanich **3.00** Alex Lester

RADIO 5 LIVE (BBC)

5.00am Morning Reports **6.00** Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **12.00pm** The Midday News **1.00** Ruscoe and Co **4.00** Drive **7.00** News Extra **7.30** Hardest Game. See Choice **8.00** Inside Edge **9.00** Hoops **9.30** Sportshop **10.00** Late Night Live **1.00am** Up All Night. News from around the world

VIRGIN

6.30am Danny Baker **9.30** Russ Williams **1.00pm** Nick Abbot **4.00** Harriet Scott **6.45** Pete and Geoff **10.00** Mark Forrest **1.00am** James Merritt **4.30** Richard Allen

TALK RADIO

6.00am The Big Boys Breakfast **9.00** Scott Chisholm **12.00pm** My Favourite Year **1.00** Anna Raeburn **3.00** Peter Deeley **5.00** The SportZone **7.00** One to One with Andy Gray **8.00** James Whale **1.00am** Ian Collins and the Creatures of the Night

BBC WORLD SERVICE

5.00am The World Today **7.00** World News **7.15** Outlook **7.55** My Century **8.00** World News **8.05** From Our Own Correspondent **8.20** Off the Shelf: Silas Marner **8.35** The Works **9.00** World News **9.05** Network **9.20** Andy Kershaw's World of Music **9.50** Sports Round-Up **10.00** Newsdesk **10.30** Britain Today **10.45** Performance **11.00** Newsdesk **11.30** Assignment **12.00pm** World News **12.05** Outlook **12.45** Sports Round-Up **1.00** Newshour **2.00** World News **2.05** The Works **2.30** Meridian Books **3.00** World News **3.05** Sports Round-Up **3.15** Westway **3.30** The Greenfield Collection **4.00** World News **4.15** Insight **4.30** The Good Relationship Guide **4.45** The Lab **5.00** Europe Today **5.30** World Business Report **5.45** Sports Round-Up **6.00** World News **6.15** Britain Today **6.30** Assignment **7.00** World News **7.05** The Works **7.30** From Our Own Correspondent **7.45** Off the Shelf: Silas Marner **8.00** Newshour **9.00** World News **9.05** World Business Report **9.20** Britain Today **9.30** Meridian Books **10.00** World News **10.15** Sports Round-Up **10.30** The Good Relationship Guide **10.45** The Lab **11.00** World News **11.05** Outlook **11.45** Insight **12.00am** The World Today **12.30** The Works **12.55** My Century **1.00** The World Today **1.30** Westway **1.45** Performance **2.00** The World Today **2.30** Focus on Faith **3.00** The World Today **3.20** Sports Round-Up **3.30** World Business Report **3.45** Insight **4.00** The World Today

CLASSIC FM

6.00am Nick Bailey's Easier Breakfast **8.00** Henry Kelly **12.00pm** Lunchtime Requests. Jane Jones presents favourite music **2.00** Concerto. Beethoven: Piano concerto No 5 in E flat major **3.00** Jamie Crick. Continuous Classics and Afternoon Romance **6.30** Newsnight. The latest headlines and sport updates **7.00** Smooth Classics at Seven. John Brunning introduces classic sounds **9.00** Evening Concert. Tavener: Eternal Memory. Part: Seven Magnificat-Antiphonen. Tavener: The last sleep of the virgin. Gorecki: Miserere; Totus Tuus. Tavener: Song for Athene **11.00** Mann at Night. A chance to wind down with the sound of ambient music **2.00am** Concerto. Beethoven: Piano concerto No 5 in E flat major (r) **3.00** Mark Griffiths. The Early Breakfast Show

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air With Petroc Trelawny. Music includes Bach (Brandenburg Concerto No 1 in F); Gershwin (Rhapsody in Blue)
9.00 Masterworks With Peter Hobday. Schubert (Piano Sonata in A flat, D557); Vaughan Williams (Five Variants of "Dives and Lazarus"); Byrd (Rejoice unto the Lord); Beethoven (Cello Sonata in A, Op 69); Poulenc (Sinfonietta)
10.30 Artist of the Week Midori talks to Joan Bakewell
11.00 Sound Stories The Restoration
12.00pm Composer of the Week: Tavener
1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert Haydn string quartets recorded at the Royal Northern College of Music. Haydn (String Quartets in B flat; (Op 1 No 1 in D minor); (Op 103; in F, Op 77 No 2)
2.00 The BBC Orchestras BBC Philharmonic under Vassily Sinaisky and Donald Hunt Elgar (Fantasia and Fugue in C minor); Brahms (Hungarian Dance No 1 in G minor); (Mozart: Clarinet Concerto in A, K622); Brahms (Symphony No 4 in E minor)
4.00 Ensemble Beethoven (Trio in B flat, Op 11)
4.45 Music Machine The Shaker people
5.00 In Tune Strauss (trio from Der Rosenkavalier) Mozart (Fantasia in C minor,
7.30 Performance on 3 BBC Symphony Orchestra under Richard Hickox. Britten (Ballad of Heroes); Vaughan Williams (Symphony No 3); Howells (Hymnus paradisi)
9.35 Postscript Mary Warnock introduces excerpts from John Stuart Mill's essays *On Liberty* and *The Subjection of Women*
10.00 Music Restored Beethoven (Sonata in F minor, Op 2 No 1); Corelli's first violin sonata; Monteverdi's first madrigal
10.45 Night Waves Composers, aristocrats, bankers and writers were among the subjects painted by Ingres, the leading portraitist of his age
11.30 Jazz Notes Alyn Shipton is joined by Campbell Burnap to review the latest CDs
12.00am Composer of the Week: Purcell With Robert King. 4: "1689-1692". Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem, Z46; Welcome, Glorious Morn, Z338; The Gordian Knot Untied, Z597; The Fairy Queen (Act 4) (r)
1.00 Through the Night With Donald Macleod. Reger (Four Symphonic Poems after Arnold Bocklin); Mahler (Symphony No 4); Schubert (Arpeggione Sonata in A minor, D821). **3.00-5.00** Schools (3.00 Music Workshop. 3.20 Let's Move! 3.40 Words Alive! 3.55 First Steps in Drama. 4.10 Listen and Write. 4.30 Alphabet Time. 4.40 Check It Out). **5.10** Brahms (Trio in A minor, Op 114).

RADIO 4

5.30am World News 5.35 Shipping Forecast
5.40 Inshore Forecast 5.45 Prayer for the Day
5.47 Farming Today With Anna Hill
6.00 Today With John Humphrys James Naughtie,
8.35 (LW) Yesterday in Parliament
9.00 In Our Time with Melvyn Bragg
9.30 Transplantations Andreas Demetriou talks to Anna Pavord (3/5) (r)
9.45 (FM) Serial: The Victorian Internet David Rintoul reads Tom Standage's history of the electric telegraph (4/5) (r)
9.45 (LW) Daily Service Director of music Alan Wilson
10.00 Woman's Hour Jenni Murray presents. Drama: Inner Voices
11.00 From Our Own Correspondent
11.30 Old Dog and the Partridge Jack pretends he has a fiancee when his old friend Ralph comes to visit. With Michael Williams (5/6)
12.00pm (FM) News 12.00 (LW) News Headlines; Shipping Forecast 12.04 You and Yours
1.00 The World at One With Nick Clarke
1.30 Hidden Treasures Lars Tharp presents the antiques quiz from Castle Howard
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Afternoon Play: Nightworkers By Louise Doughty. Two men meet a mysterious stranger while checking for bombs in the tunnels under London. With Harry Myers and Daniel O'Grady
3.00 Call You and Yours (0870) 010 0444
3.30 The Vale Grand summer opening. (6/6) (r)
3.45 This Sceptred Isle Anna Massey narrates the history of Britain, inspired by the writings of Winston Churchill. Penance, Rebellion and Ireland
4.00 Law in Action With Marcel Berlins
4.30 The Material World The role of scientists in detecting art forgeries
5.00 PM With Eddie Mair and Nigel Wrench
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Yes, Minister Comedy (r)
7.00 The Archers George gets an uncanny sense of what's going to happen next
7.15 Front Row Arts programme, presented by Francine Stock
7.45 Inner Voices by Rikki Beadle Blair (r)
8.00 Case History The most hated man in Britain during World War One, the Kaiser also suffered from a terrible disability. Roy Porter assesses what part ill-health played in the German leader's career. The Kaiser (r)
8.30 The Week in Westminster Steve Richards of the *New Statesman* looks behind the scenes at Westminster
9.00 Testbeds Vanessa Collingridge explores how technology will affect the future
9.30 In Our Time with Melvyn Bragg Broadcast earlier (r)
10.00 The World Tonight With Robin Lustig
10.45 Book at Bedtime: The Sound of Trumpets By John Mortimer. Terry Fitton appears on a local radio chat show — but his moment of fame doesn't quite get the reaction he'd hoped for
11.00 Late Night on 4: World of Pub Bright spark Dodgy Phil comes up with another plan for the pub. Starring Phil Cornwell, Alistair McGowan and John Thomson. Last in series (4/4)
11.30 (FM) Experimental Feature: Laughing Close Enough for Jazz John Fordham investigates the link between comedy and jazz
11.30 (LW) Today in Parliament Update from Westminster
12.00am News
12.30 The Late Book: Round Ireland with a Fridge Tony Hawks recalls his experiences hitch-hiking around Ireland with a fridge (4/5)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1. FM 97.6-99.8. RADIO 2. FM 88.0-90.2. RADIO 3. FM 90.2-92.4. RADIO 4. FM 92.4-94.6; LW 198; MW 720. RADIO 5 LIVE. MW 693, 909. WORLD SERVICE. MW 648; LW 198 (12.45-5.55am). CLASSIC FM. FM 100-102. VIRGIN RADIO. FM 105.8; MW 1197, 1215. TALK RADIO. MW 1053, 1089.
Television and radio listings compiled by Ian Hughes, Rosemary Smith, Susan Thomson, Jane Gregory and John McNamara.

Seizing every opportunity to enjoy herself

Some people are born misanthropes; some achieve misanthropy; and some have misanthropy thrust upon them. Much of the joy of **Inside Story** (BBC1), about a pair of bailiffs in Leeds, was trying to guess into which of these three categories Corinne Ladrischia fell. *Misanthropy seems to be a common feature* of occupations such as traffic wardens, bailiffs, the people who work in customer relations departments of utility companies. But it's always intriguing to try to work out whether it's dealing with angry *members of the public that eventually* turns traffic wardens and bailiffs into people always braced for a fight or whether, like Robert Duvall in *Apocalypse Now*, they have always loved the smell of napalm first thing in the morning, and so chose to go into these particular professions because they provide the greatest scope for upsetting their fellow human beings without having to do anything that might be actually illegal.

If Corinne learnt many important things at her mother's knee, "silence is golden" was not one of them. "I must admit that when we are actually bailiffing," she admits, "I'm doing the talking." We were only a few minutes into Richard Taylor and Ian Stuttard's entertaining film, but already we no more needed to be told this than we would need Al Gore to tell us that he has less charisma than dandruff. Corinne never stops talking. Mark Stebbings, the fellow-bailiff with whom she tours Leeds collecting cash or cars or dining tables to settle unpaid council tax bills, is also her partner, and father of their young daughter. He gets in his words when Corinne breathes in, like the triangle player in an orchestra patiently waiting for his moment.

"A lot of people take an instant dislike to me," Corinne confessed. "And I don't know why, because I'm only out there doing my job." *Maybe, Corinne, it's because you* are as cheery as a crocodile with toothache. "I don't go into premises and say, 'Good morning'," she boasts, "because it's not going to be a good morning."

Certainly not if Corinne has anything to do with it. It's not long before her guard slips and she settles the question that's been nagging us: "It's not a very nice thing to say that I enjoy being a bailiff, but unfortunately I do. I meet a lot of arrogant people who think they're above the law and they think that nobody can do anything to them, probably because they're in a good financial position and they'll pay when they're ready. And the enjoyment there is that we get them to pay or we remove the goods. In other words we knock them down a peg or two." It could have been Ray from *The Clampers* talking about motorists.

REVIEW

Joe Joseph

Still, I'd pay to hear Corinne's view of Elizabeth Emanuel, the woman who — with her former husband — designed the then Diana Spencer's wedding dress. Having long since fallen on hard times, Emanuel sought out a backer. The backer she found was Shami Ahmed, the owner of the Joe Bloggs jeans company. What was *so gripping* about Nick Mirsky's wonderful film for **Blood on the Carpet** (BBC2) about their shotgun *marriage* and *morning-after* divorce was that it turned into a corporate homage to *Blind Date*.

Having outlined the basic gulf in their approaches to business (Liz expected Shami to fund air fares and fancy hotels so that she could josh with royals and celebrities, which Shami said would make financial sense if it were a proven way of attracting custom — which it clearly wasn't, or else why had her company foundered?), Mirsky showed us how it all unravelled the minute Liz flew to New York for what Shami had deemed an unnecessary trip. Shami was on the next plane, seeking an explanation. For Liz, who was already "*that* stressed out" by Shami's decision to relocate her cutting rooms to — yikes! — Wembley, it was the final straw. Mirsky then compiled a duel of film clips, *Blind Date*-style, with *Liz and Shami* each giving their version of the fateful phone call which Shami, from *another room* in the same hotel, made to Emanuel.

"He just got so hostile with me." "She was shouting at me." "He was so insulting. He trashed me as a designer. *You're* talking about a man who thinks the biggest thing ever is to design diamond-encrusted jeans and he thinks that's classy! How could he possibly understand the stuff I was doing?" "I didn't understand how to lose money, no. That's true." "The man is a dictator." "You must remember not to go on an ego trip." "He's got a thing about being in control." "I'd really never met anybody that couldn't see reason like that." Ooh, and then what happened, chuck? asked the spirit of Cilla.

"She put the phone down." "He put the phone down on me." "No, no. *She* put the phone down."

It only lacked Cilla telling us: "Well, folks, they didn't hit it off at all, did they! And it looked so promising, what with Liz's loovly, loovly gowns and Shami's gorgeous business brain. Never mind, chucks, I'm sure you'll both find the right partner soon." If only *Newsnight* had used this technique when Peter Mandelson and Charlie Whelan were feuding about who played what part in their respective downfalls.

Mersey Blues (BBC2) has at last reached that scene we kept seeing in the trailers for the series, where *a man is arrested by police for murder* and he replies: "Meerdagh?" It was like that moment in a concert when the band finally plays the tune everybody's been waiting for. With a murder investigation hanging in mid-air, a real-life prime suspect in the cells, and a bent copper still to be exposed, this series has become more gripping than Burt Reynolds's toupée glue.

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (98916)
7.00 BBC Breakfast News (T) (81751)
9.00 Kilroy (T) (8241645)
9.45 The Vanessa Show (T) (5614515)
10.55 News; Regional News; Weather (T) (7580409)
11.00 Real Rooms (7590886)
11.25 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (T) (7560645)
11.55 News; Regional News (T) (1786041)
12.00pm Call My Bluff (38312)
12.30 Wipeout (3042886)
12.55 The Weather Show (T) (55834138)
1.00 One O'Clock News; Weather (T) (91138)
1.30 Regional News; Weather (66274645)
1.40 Neighbours (T) (65954461)
2.05 Ironside (r) (7247935)
2.55 Body Spies (7792206)
3.25 Children's BBC: Playdays (2928490) **3.45** The All New Popeye Show (9649393) **3.55** Pocket Dragon Adventures (9645577) **4.05** Rugrats (5502664) **4.20** Home Farm Twins (5823157) **4.35** Short Change (1206577) **5.00** Newsround (5043206) **5.10** Grange Hill (6176461)
5.33 Rewind (T) (556857)
5.35 Neighbours (r) (T) (268312)
6.00 Six O'Clock News; Weather (T) (913)
6.30 Regional News Magazine (683)
7.00 Watchdog (T) (8480)

Melanie (Tamzin Outhwaite) finds romance in the square (7.30pm)

7.30 EastEnders Passion mounts between Michael and Lisa (T) (867)
8.00 Vets in Practice Alison diagnoses an unusual bone disorder, while heartbroken Craig struggles to save a dog's life (T) (5428)
8.30 Fat Free Terri and Sean decide to put their diets on hold for the duration of the holiday, while Tracey embarks on a *frenzy of activity* to speed up her weight loss (4/6) (T) (4935)
9.00 Nine O'Clock News (T) (2799)
9.30 Birds of a Feather Sharon and Tracey discover easy money in the glamorous world of the casino, but find that there are always strings — attached. Comedy, starring Pauline Quirke and Linda Robson (r) (T) (960428)
10.20 CHOICE **Mad About Monet** The life and times of the painter Claude Monet (T) (495549)
11.10 Question Time (705596)
12.15am European Figure Skating Championships *Action from Prague* (1912981)
1.00 Betrayal of Silence (1989) Meg Foster stars as an assistant district attorney defending a girl who has made serious allegations against a renowned foster home. Directed by Jeffrey Woolnough (T) (43368) FILM
2.30 Weather (4241165)
2.35 BBC News 24 (24286829)

BBC2

7.00am Children's BBC Breakfast Show: Open a Door (2100413) **7.05** Teletubbies (2509480) **7.30** *Secret Squirrel and Co* (3488312) **7.55** Blue Peter (2802954) **8.20** Taz-Mania (9432732) **8.40** Polka Dot Shorts (8711515) **8.50** Fiddley Foodle Bird (8717799) **9.00** Daytime On Two: Job Bank (7637770) **9.10** Belief File (6053935) **9.30** Watch (8828667) **9.45** Come Outside (8614022) **10.00** Children's BBC: Teletubbies (56577) **10.30** Daytime On Two: Storytime (5480206) **10.45** The Experimenter (3788041) **11.05** Space Ark (9251751) **11.15** Zig Zag (1030225) **11.35** Lifeschool (5277935) **12.00pm** Job Bank (6958886) **12.10** English File (4549577) **12.30** Working Lunch (69138)
1.00 Children's BBC: Fiddley Foodle Bird (73245190)
1.10 The Great Picture Chase (r) (82141954)
1.40 The Arts and Crafts Show (65975954)
2.10 Sporting Greats (22798428)
2.40 News (T) (9524393)
2.45 Westminster (T) (9375442)
3.25 News (T) (2560954)
3.30 A Place for Annie (1993) A dedicated doctor cares for an HIV-positive baby, but faces emotional upheaval when the child's natural mother returns to claim her. Moving drama, with Sissy Spacek. Directed by John Gray (T) (86190) FILM
5.00 Tennis: Australian Open Highlights of the women's semi-finals (6393)
6.00 The Outer Limits (r) (T) (164374)
6.45 European Figure Skating Championships (575751)
7.30 First Sight (T) (409)
8.00 The Travel Show (T) (6770)

The talkshow host and newspaper columnist (8.30pm)

8.30 Jeremy Clarkson's Extreme Machines The Top Gear presenter checks out the American F15 plane and goes drag-racing on snowmobiles (r) (T) (2577)
9.00 CHOICE **Meet the Ancestors** A team of police officers and archaeologists unlock secrets of the past as they investigate the contents of a recently discovered Stone Age burial chamber in Orkney (T) (3041)
9.30 CHOICE **Horizon** A look at the variety of theories about the end of the Universe, highlighting research which has led to a bizarre discovery — a previously unknown form of energy that could challenge the fundamental laws of physics (T) (951770)
10.20 Meetings with Remarkable Trees (4/8) (r) (T) (881157)
10.28 Video Nation Shorts (T) (300799)
10.30 Newsnight (T) (977138)
11.15 Late Review (344616)
11.55 Skiing Forecast (215138)
12.00am Despatch Box (15165)
12.30 BBC Learning Zone

HTV WEST

5.30am ITN Morning News (32206)
6.00 GMTV (6366770)
9.25 Trisha (T) (3130041)
10.30 This Morning (T) (24707751)
12.15pm HTV News and Weather (T) (9931119)
12.30 ITN Lunchtime News; Weather (T) (56664)
1.00 Shortland Street Lulu has her first date with James (86206)
1.30 Home and Away Justine breaks Tom's heart (T) (55935)
2.00 ***The Jerry Springer Show*** *Outrageous* anything-goes American talk show (T) (2471225)
2.45 Dale's Supermarket Sweep (T) (620732)
3.15 ITN News Headlines (T) (2568596)
3.20 HTV News (T) (2565409)
3.25 CITV: *Mopatop's Shop* (2548732) **3.35** The Adventures of Dawdle (8097954) **3.45** The Sylvester and Tweety Mysteries (8077190) **4.00** Lavender Castle (6598461) **4.15** Hey Arnold! (6037044) **4.40** The Worst Witch (7681867)
5.10 A Country Practice Robert returns with *his new bride* (3850698)
5.36 HTV Crimestoppers (840206)
5.40 ITN Early Evening News; Weather (T) (873393)
6.00 Home and Away Justine breaks Tom's heart (r) (T) (108732)
6.25 WEST: HTV Weather (470596)
6.25 WALES: Wales Tonight (T) (731288)
6.30 The West Tonight (T) (751)
7.00 Emmerdale Ned has a change of fortune (T) (1848)
7.30 WEST: We Can Work It Out Judy Finnigan and the team investigate more consumer complaints (935)
7.30 WALES: Forgotten Treasures (935)
8.00 The Bill Garfield jumps at the chance of taking part in an operation which will *mean spending a weekend at the races* (T) (5515)

Barry (Steve Toussaint) goes undercover (9pm)

9.00 The Knock An illegal immigrant found hiding in the luggage compartment of a coach exposes an Algerian heroin *smuggling ring (4/6) (T) (5751)*
10.00 News at Ten (T) (39409)
10.30 HTV News and Weather (T) (802415)
10.40 Thursday Night Live (7866472)
12.10am WEST: Tales from the Darkside (5489165)
12.10 WALES: We Can Work It Out (5489165)
12.40 The Jerry Springer Show (T) (7255900)
1.25 T in the Park (1228097)
2.20 Box Office America *(5454368)*
2.50 Cybernet (7321252)
3.20 Murder, She Wrote (4159707)
4.10 Potty About Pets (95359962)
4.35 Coach (34039894)
4.55 ITV Nightscreen (1275417)

CENTRAL

As HTV West except:
12.20-12.30pm Central News (6557867)
1.00 Echo Point (86206)
1.30 Jerry Springer (9579022)
2.15-2.45 Home and Away (621461)
3.20-3.25 Central News *(2565409)*
5.10-5.40 Shortland Street (3850698)
6.25-6.55 Central News (116751)
6.55-7.00 Lifeline (249848)
10.30-10.40 Central News (802415)
1.30am Pirate TV (62610)
2.00 Real Stories of the Highway Patrol *(9452146)*
2.20 Judge Judy (9456962)
2.45 Pop Down the Pub (7413287)
3.10 Cybernet (71297959)
3.35 Potty About Pets (14796165)
4.05 Central Jobfinder '99 (8427078)
5.20-5.30 Asian Eye (4711233)

As HTV West except: **12.15pm-12.27 Westcountry News** (T) (9931119) **12.27-12.30 Illuminations** (6565886) **1.00 Emmerdale** (r) (T) (86206) **1.30 The Jerry Springer Show** (T) (9579022) **2.15-2.45 Home and Away** (T) (621461) **3.20-3.25 Westcountry News** (T) (2565409) **5.08 Birthday People** (8162916) **5.10-5.40 Home and Away** (T) (3850698) **6.00-7.00 Westcountry Live** (T) (64683) **10.30-10.40 Westcountry News** (T) (802415) **12.10am-12.40 Short Story Cinema** (5489165)

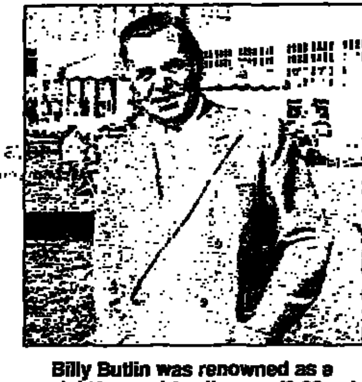
As HTV West except: ***12.15pm-12.30 Meridian*** **News** (9931119) **5.10-5.40 Home and Away** (T) (3850698) **6.00 Meridian Tonight** (T) (799) **6.30-7.00 Getaways** (4/10) (751) **10.30-10.40 Meridian News** (T) (802415) **12.10am-12.40 Jenny** (5489165) **5.00-5.30 Freescreen** (T) (17184)

As HTV West except: **12.19pm Anglia Air Watch** *(6536374)* ***12.20-12.30 Anglia News*** (6557867) **5.10-5.40 Home and Away** (T) (3850698) **5.58 Anglia Weather** (853770) **6.00 Anglia News** (T) (799) **6.30-7.00 About Anglia** (751) **10.29 Anglia Air Watch** (397225) **10.30-10.40 Anglia News** (T) (802415)

Starts: **5.55am Sesame Street** (r) (45501916) **7.00 The Big Breakfast** (47564770) **9.00** ***Ysgolion (T)*** *(41573751)* ***9.20 Geographical*** **Eye** (41593515) **9.40 English Programme** (80243577) **10.00 Middle English** (98849374) **10.20 Fourways Farm** (71344157) **10.30** ***Scientific Eye*** *(17835409)* ***10.50*** **What the Papers Said** (93518577) **11.00 The Number Crew** (53246022) **11.10 Channel Hopping** (35169916) **11.30 Powerhouse** (T) (24420225) **12.00pm Bewitched** (T) (16145480) **12.30 Sesame Street** (T) (38147954) **1.00 Planed Plant** (T) (47574157) **1.30 Travelog Treks** (T) (69425157) **1.45 FILM: Wee Willie Winkie** (T) (34836596) **3.30 Hampton Court Palace** (T) (56827461) **4.00 Fifteen-to-One** (T) (56846596) **4.30 Ricki Lake** (T) (56835480) ***5.00 Planed Plant*** *(35143570)* **5.30 Countdown** (T) (56826732) **6.00 Newyddion 6** (T) (69705022) **6.10 Heno** (T) (95414119) **7.00 Pobol y Cwm** (T) (14535026) **7.30 Newyddion** (T) (56843409) **8.00 Penblwydd Hapus** (T) (91787914) **8.30 Pam Fi Duw?** (T) (23080931) **9.00 i dot** (88928634) **10.00 Father Ted** (r) (T) (54694022) **10.35 Friends** (r) (T) (67526225) **11.05 King of the Hill** (T) (94464567) **11.35 Whose Line is It Anyway?** (T) (69319886) **12.05am NME Premier Live Shows** (57800707) **12.35 Bob and Margaret** (T) (66226962) **1.05 Dispatches** (T) (70802349) **1.35 Diwedd**

CHANNEL 4

5.40am Pink Panther (7589732)
5.50 Animal Alphabet (7427916)
5.55 Sesame Street (4363428)
7.00 The Big Breakfast (74461)
9.00 Schools: History in Action (6059119) **9.20** Geographical Eye Over Britain 1 (6062683) **9.40** The English Programme (7868770) **10.00** Middle English (6830751) **10.20** Fourways Farm *(4367683)* ***10.30*** *Scientific Eye (3790886)* **10.50** What the Papers Said (2202119) **11.00** The Number Crew (9254848) **11.10** Channel Hopping Auf Deutsch (1026022) **11.30** Powerhouse (T) (6374)
12.00pm Sesame Street (29022)
12.30 Bewitched (r) (T) (54206)
1.00 Pet Rescue *(r) (T) (84848)*
1.30 The Ocean World of John Stoneman (r) (T) (53577)
2.00 Earthscapes (35752848)
2.05 Powder River (1953) Western about a gold prospector who becomes a town marshal to avenge his mining partner's *murder. Stars Cameron Mitchell.* Directed by Louis King (T) (1408683) FILM
3.30 Hampton Court Palace (T) (157)
4.00 Fifteen-to-One (T) (664)
4.30 Countdown (T) (1290916)
4.55 Ricki Lake (T) (4301374)
5.30 Pet Rescue (T) (428)
6.00 Dishes Dating show with a culinary theme (T) (111)
6.30 Hollyoaks (T) (393)
7.00 Channel 4 News (T) *(452461)*
7.55 Music of the Millennium (T) (383041)
8.00 Norland Nannies Cameras follow the nannies as they endure an arduous training weekend in the Welsh mountains (3/6) (T) (8138)



Billy Butlin was renowned as a straightforward family man (8.30pm)

8.30 Billy Butlin The darker side of the holiday-camp king Billy Butlin, who was in the public eye for almost half a century (r) (T) (18683)
9.30 Dispatches Report on the health dangers of excessive salt intake (T) *(67770)*
10.00 Rising Damp (r) (T) (454577)
10.35 Whose Line is it Anyway? (T) (280003)
11.05 Ally McBeal (r) (T) (865954)
12.00am 4 Later (9283558)
12.05 NME Premier Live Shows (5488436)
12.35 Oz (8425368)
1.40 Vidz (3002184)
2.15 Late Toon (7938455)
2.25 Hound Dog Man (1959) A youngster *heads off on a hunting trip with an older* friend, hoping he will share a few of life's secrets with him. Musical drama, starring Fabian and Stuart Whitman. Directed by *Don Siegel (9658875)* FILM
3.55 Mardi Gras (1958) A military school cadet wins a raffle and gets to date a film star as his prize. Musical comedy, starring Pat Boone. Directed by Edmund Goulding (852349) FILM

CHANNEL 5

6.00am 5 News and Sport Headline round-up (7479225)
7.00 WideWorld Part five. The controversial Hall Genome Project (r) (T) (9574428)
7.30 Milkshake! (6655931)
7.35 Wimzie's House (r); 5 News Update (9298041)
8.00 Havakazoo (r) (1638732)
8.30 Dappledown Farm (r); 5 News Update (1637003)
9.00 Animal House (r) (T) (1651683)
9.30 The Oprah Winfrey Show (6097577)
10.20 Sunset Beach Maria hires a private eye (T) (2695225)
11.10 Leeza (2575751)
12.00pm 5 News at Noon (T) (1648119)
12.30 ***Family Affairs*** *Dave gives Chris a* massive cheque (r) (T); 5 News Update (9414848)
1.00 The Bold and the Beautiful Jessica admits she's been raped (T) (9573799)
1.30 The Roseanne Show Jay Leno and Traci Lords guest; 5 News Update (9413119)
2.00 100 Per Cent Gold (6834119)
2.30 Good Afternoon An hour of entertainment, featuring Liverpool Mums, Cryptogram and Selling the Family Silver; 5 News Update (4026683)
3.30 Tokyo Cowboy (1995) Premiere. A disillusioned burger chef quits his job in Tokyo and emigrates to the wilderness of Canada to follow his dream of becoming a cowboy. Culture-clash comedy, with Hiromoto Ita. Directed by Kathy Garneau; 5 News Update (9100374) FILM
5.20 Sunset Beach Shown earlier (r) (T); 5 News Update (6659003)
6.00 100 Per Cent (5795428)
6.30 Family Affairs (T) (5779480)
7.00 5 News; Weather (T) (6838935)
7.30 Wild Flight (T); 5 News Update (5775664)
8.00 The Pepsi Chart (6847683)
8.30 CHOICE ***Family Confidential*** Report on how the getting-together of a couple brought up as stepbrother and stepsister affected those close to them, especially when they announced their wedding plans (3/6); 5 News Update (6826190)
9.00 Seeds of Deception (TVM 1993) Two women desperate for children manage to conceive through a sperm donor programme, but it soon transpires that the unorthodox methods used by the doctor involved aren't all they seem. Fact-based drama, starring Melissa *Gilbert, Shanna Reed and Tom Verica.* Directed by Arlene Sanford (T); 5 News Update (12885916) FILM
10.50 Hotline (r) (2663515)
11.25 The Jack Docherty Show (8440684)
12.05am Live and Dangerous (50510962)
4.40 Prisoner: Cell Block H *(3421900)*
5.30 100 Per Cent (r) (1609815)

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PAY TV: SATELLITE, CABLE AND DIGITAL

● *For further listings see Saturday's Vision*

SKY ONE

7.00am Count Duckula (32409) **7.30** The Simpsons (11916) **8.00** The Simpsons (75225) **8.30** Hollywood Squares (74596) **9.00** Sally Jessy Raphael (84683) **10.00** The Oprah Winfrey Show (40428) **11.00** Guilty! (20664) **12.00pm** Jenny Jones (99393) **1.00** Mad About You (24480) **1.30** Jeopardy (13157) **2.00** Sally Jessy Raphael (99206) **3.00** Jenny Jones (47521) **4.00** Guilty! (23886) **5.00** Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (95211) **6.00** *Married — With Children* (3935) **6.30** Dream Team (7515) **7.00** The Simpsons (1480) **7.30** The Simpsons (3799) **8.00** America's Dumbest Criminals (7428) **8.30** World's Weirdest TV (8935) **9.00** Friends (12770) **9.30** ER (80799) **10.30** Veronica's Closet (55461) **11.00** Dream Team (24516) **11.30** Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (63312) **12.30am** Highlander (74542) **1.30** Long Play (5484900)

SKY BOX OFFICE

Sky's pay-per-view movie channels. To view any film telephone 0990 800888
SKY BOX OFFICE 1 (Transponder 26) **Jackie Chan's First Strike (1996)**
SKY BOX OFFICE 2 (Transponder 60) **The Borrowers (1997)**
SKY BOX OFFICE 3 (Transponder 59) **The Wings of the Dove (1997)** **The Devil's Advocate (1997)**
SKY BOX OFFICE 4 (Transponder 58) **Fathers' Day (1997)**

FILMFOUR

6.00pm The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill, But Came Down a Mountain (1995) (7620113) **8.00 Four Weddings and a Funeral (1994)** (7325664) **10.00 Sirens (1994)** (7071190) **11.35 Bitter Moon (1992)** (3871639) **1.50am The Last Emperor (1987)** (16163542) **5.00** Close

SKY PREMIER

6.00am Daddy Long Legs (1955) (51582342) **8.10 A Change of Heart (1997)** (16342425) **10.00 Pete's Dragon (1977)** (84405515) **12.15pm** The Directors: The Films of Norman Jewison (956354) **1.15** Femmes Fatales: Drew Barrymore (5990963) **2.00 A Change of Heart (1997)** (509770) **3.45 Pete's Dragon (1977)** (38839041) **6.00 Little Girls in Pretty Boxes (1997)** (69374) **7.30** Hollywood Buzz (6409) **8.00 Ghosts from the Past (1996)** (39541312) **10.10 Absolute Power (1997)** (72087732) **12.15am Copycat (1995)** (328875) **2.00 To Love, Honour and Deceive (1996)** (186788) **3.55 The Great White Hype (1996)** (89531349)

SKY MOVIEMAX

5.35am McLeod's Daughters (1996) (53514190) ***7.15 Son of Godzilla (1967)*** (11090916) **9.00 The Kid (1997)** (83022) **11.00 Emma (1996)** (28190) **1.00pm A Message from Holly (1992)** (82896) **3.00 The Kid (1997)** (74428) **5.00 Emma (1996)** (51645) **7.00 A Message from Holly (1992)** (24935) **8.30** E! News Week in Review (1003) **9.00 Murder at 1600 (1997)** (29935) **11.00 Logan's War: Bound By Honor (1998)** (208041) **12.40am The Killing Grounds (1997)** (583145) **2.15 Laws of Gravity (1992)** (687504) **3.55 Born Bad (1997)** (388829)

SKY CINEMA

4.00pm Sweet Charity (1969) *(8550732)* **6.00 Africa Screams (1949)** (7938645) **8.00 Breakout (1975)** (7933190) **10.00 The Name of the Rose (1986)** (74131062) **12.10am Cruising (1980)** (1167405) **1.55 Beyond the Clouds (1995)** (8881338) **3.45 Tight Spot (1955)** (26302455)

TNT

9.00pm An American in Paris (1951) (36353190) **11.15 Butterfield Eight (1960)** (14214428) **1.15am One is a Lonely Number (1972)** (60089233) **3.00 An American in Paris (1951)** (36732392) *5.00 Close*

SKY SPORTS 1

7.00am Live European PGA Golf: Heineken Classic **10.00** Spanish Football **12.00pm** *Aerobics Oz Style* **12.30** Live European PGA Golf: Heineken Classic **3.00** Ringside Boxing **4.30** Survival of the Fittest **5.00** Outdoor Quest **6.00** Sports Centre **6.30** Football League Review **7.00** Futbol Mundial **7.30** Live European PGA Golf: Heineken Classic **10.00** Sports Centre **10.15** You're On Sky Sports! **10.45** Trans World Sport **11.45** Sports Centre **12.00am** You're *On Sky Sports!* **12.30** Football League Review **1.00** Futbol Mundial **1.30** Fishing: Tight Lines **2.30** Trans World Sport **3.30** Sports Centre **3.45** Close

SKY SPORTS 2

7.00am Aerobics Oz Style **7.30** Sports Centre **7.45** Racing News **8.15** Unbelievable Sports **8.45** Sports Centre **9.00** Fish TV **10.00** Ringside Boxing **11.30** Unbelievable Sports **12.00pm** Outdoor Quest **1.00** Live Snooker: Welsh Open **4.00** World Pool League **5.00** Inside the PGA Tour **5.30** Football League Review **6.00** What A Weekend **6.30** Inside the PGA Tour **7.00** Live Snooker: Welsh Open **10.00** US Golf: Phoenix Open **12.00am** Outdoor *Quest* **1.00** *The Rugby Club* **2.00** Ice Hockey **4.30** Futbol Mundial **5.00** Sports Centre **5.15** Live International Cricket

SKY SPORTS 3

12.00pm World Pool League **1.00** Fish TV **1.30** Dickie Davies' Sporting Heroes **2.30** Football: The Entertainers **3.00** Spanish Football **5.00** Unbelievable Sports **5.30** The Rugby Club **6.30** Fishing: Tight Lines **7.30** Live Ice Hockey **10.00** Bobby Charlton's Football Scrapbook

EUROSPORT

7.30am Bobsleigh 8.00 Biathlon **9.00** Tennis **12.30pm** Live Figure Skating **4.00** Olympic Games **4.30** Tennis **5.30** Live *Figure Skating* **10.00** Tennis **11.00** Car On Ice **11.30** Snowboarding **12.00am** Snowboarding

UK GOLD

7.00am Crossroads **7.30** Neighbours **7.55** EastEnders **8.30** The Bill **9.30** The House of Eliott **10.30** Rhoda **11.00** Dallas **11.55** Neighbours **12.25pm** EastEnders **1.00** Juliet Bravo **2.00** Dallas **2.55** The Bill **3.55** EastEnders **4.30** Rhoda **5.00** All Creatures Great and Small **6.00** Dynasty **7.00** 2point4 Children **7.40** It Ain't Half Hot, Mum **8.20** Yes, Minister **9.00** Fawlty Towers **10.20** Ivanhoe **11.25** The Bill **12.25am** Backup **1.20 FILM: Devils of Darkness (1965)** *3.00 Shopping with Screenshop*

GRANADA PLUS

6.00am Within These Walls **7.00** On the Buses **7.30** Doctor in the House **8.00** Beadle's About **8.30** Up the Garden Path **9.00** Classic Coronation Street **9.30** Emmerdale Farm **10.00** thirtysomething **11.00** Hawaii Five-O **12.00pm** Classic *Coronation Street* **12.30** *Emmerdale Farm* **1.00** Nearest and Dearest **1.30** Agony **2.00** thirtysomething **3.00** The Love Boat **4.00** The Saint **5.00** Hawaii Five-O **6.00** Emmerdale Farm **6.30** Classic Coronation Street **7.00** Mission: Impossible **8.00** The Love Boat **9.00** Classic Coronation Street **9.30** The Comedians **10.00** Jokers Wild **10.30** Hogan's Heroes **11.00** Granada men

Elle Macpherson (centre) stars in the story of the controversial Australian artist Norman Lindsay (FilmFour 10pm)

CARLTON SELECT

5.00pm What's Cooking? **5.30** Gridlock **6.00** London Bridge **6.30** Home to Roost **7.00** Boon **8.00** Animal SOS **8.30** Goodnight Sweetheart **9.00** St Elsewhere **10.00** The Other Side of Paradise **11.00** Hill Street Blues **12.00am** Home to Roost **12.30** Gridlock

DISNEY CHANNEL

6.00am Bear **6.25** Classic Toons **6.35** Gummi Bears **7.00** Classic Toons **7.10** Aladdin **7.35** 101 Dalmatians **8.00** Goof Troop *8.25 Classic Toons 8.45* New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh **9.00** The Adventures of Spot **9.05** Animal Shelf **9.15** Pocket Dragons **9.30** Bear **9.55** The Toothbrush Family **10.00** Bee Size **10.10** Tots TV **10.30** The Big Garage **10.45** PB and J Otter **11.00** Sesame Street **12.00pm** The Adventures of Spot **12.05** Animal Shelf **12.15** Pocket Dragons **12.30** Bear **12.55** The Toothbrush Family **1.00** Bee Size **1.15** Tots TV **1.30** The Big Garage **1.45** PB and J Otter **2.00** Quack Pack **2.30** New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh **3.00** The Little Mermaid **3.30** Art Attack **4.00** 101 Dalmatians **4.30** Hercules: The TV Show **5.00** Recess **5.15** Pepper Ann **5.30** Smart Guy **6.00** Teen Angel **6.30** Boy Meets World **7.00** Honey I Shrunk the Kids: The TV *show* **7.50** *Classic Toons* ***8.00 FILM: Under*** **Wraps (1997)** **9.30** Home Improvement **10.00** Dinosaurs **10.30** The Wonder Years **11.00** Dr Quinn: Medicine Woman

FOX KIDS NETWORK

6.00am Power Rangers **7.00** Mortal Kombat **7.25** Oggy and the Cockroaches **7.30** Donkey Kong **8.00** *Goosebumps 8.25 Sam and Max 8.35* Spiderman **9.00** X-Men **9.25** Fantastic Four **9.50** The Incredible Hulk **10.15** Casper **10.30** Oggy and the Cockroaches **11.00** The Mouse and the Monster **11.05** Eek!Stravaganza **11.30** Life with Louie **11.55** Home to Rent **12.05pm** Sam and Max **12.30** Donkey Kong **1.00** Mowgli: The *New Adventure of Jungle Book* **1.25** Ace Ventura **1.50** *Spiderman* **2.15** *X-Men* **2.40** Fantastic Four **3.05** The Incredible Hulk **3.30** Roy and Lisa's Big Ride **3.35** Mortal Kombat **4.00** Spiderman **4.25** *Mowgli: The New Adventures of Jungle Book* **4.50** Home to Rent **5.00** Goosebumps **5.25** Eerie Indiana: The Other Dimension **5.50** Oggy **5.55** Donkey Kong Country **6.25** Sam and Max **6.50** Eek!Stravaganza

NICKELODEON

6.00am Muppet Babies **6.30** Rocko's *Modern Life* **7.00** CatDog **7.30** *Rugrats* **8.00** The Wild Thornberrys **8.30** *Arthur* **9.00** Children's BBC **10.00** Wimzie's House **10.30** Babar **11.00** The Magic School Bus **11.30** PB Bear/Budgie the Little Helicopter/Animal Antics/Family Ness **12.00pm** Rugrats **12.30** Blue's Clues **1.00** Bananas in Pyjamas **1.30** Little Bear Stories **2.00** Clangers/King Rollo/Wombles/Bod **2.30** Children's BBC **3.00** Children's BBC **3.30** Pippi Longstocking **4.00** Hey Arnold! **4.30** Rugrats **5.00** Sister Sister **5.30** Kenan and Kel **6.00** Sabrina the Teenage Witch **6.30** Driven Crazy **7.00** Close

TROUBLE

7.30am City Guys **8.00** Saved By The Bell The New Class **8.30** Hang Time **9.00** Tempest! **10.00** Hollyoaks **10.30** Echo *Point* ***11.00*** *Sweet Valley High* ***11.30*** California Dreams **12.00pm** The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air **12.30** In the House **1.00** Tempest! **2.00** Hollyoaks **2.30** Echo Point **3.00** Ready Or Not **3.30** City Guys **4.00** The *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* ***4.30*** *In the House* **5.00** Saved by the Bell: The New Class **5.30** Sweet Valley High **6.00** Hang Time **6.30** Sugar's Real Life Stories **6.45** Bangs **7.00** USA High **7.30** Ready Or Not

BRAVO

8.00pm The A-Team **9.00** LAPD **9.30** Cops **10.00** Extreme Championship Wrestling **10.30** Erotic Series **11.00 FILM: The Punisher (1990)** **1.00am** Sex Bytes **1.30** Scary Sex **2.00** Extreme Championship Wrestling **2.30** Cops **3.00 FILM: COD (1981)** **5.00** LAPD **5.30** *Bushido* ***6.00*** *Close*

PARAMOUNT COMEDY

7.00pm Clueless **7.30** Grace Under Fire **8.00** Roseanne **8.30** News Radio **9.00** Cybill **9.30** Vic Reeves Big Night Out **10.00** Frasier **10.30** Cheers **11.00** Seinfeld **11.30** The Larry Sanders Show **12.00am** Late Night with David Letterman **1.00** Taxi **1.30** The Critic **2.00** Dr Katz **2.30** Soap **3.00** Wings **3.30** Nightstand **4.00** Close

THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

SATELLITE: 8pm-MIDNIGHT ONLY

7.30am Bloomberg Information Television **8.00** Sightings **9.00** Buck Rogers **10.00** Quantum Leap **11.00** Dark Shadows **11.30** The Ray Bradbury Theatre **12.00pm** The Twilight Zone **1.00** Tales of the Unexpected **2.00** Amazing Stories **2.30** Mysteries, Magic and Miracles **3.00** Buck Rogers **4.00** *The Incredible Hulk* ***5.00*** *Sightings* **6.00** Time Trax **7.00** Quantum Leap **8.00** Mercy Point **9.00** Babylon 5 **10.00 FILM: Spaceballs (1987)** **11.55** Sci-Focus **12.00am** New Alfred Hitchcock **12.30** The *Ray Bradbury Theatre* ***1.00 FILM: House IV (1990)*** **2.55** Sci-Focus **3.00** The Twilight Zone **3.30** Dark Shadows

HOME & LEISURE

6.00am Today's Gourmet **6.30** Graham Kerr **7.00** Craftwise **7.30** The Painted House **8.00** Wedding Story **8.30** A Baby Story **9.00** Simply Painting **9.30** The Great Garden Game **10.00** Bloom **10.30** Cookabout with Greg and Max **11.00** Two's Country. Get Stuck In **11.30** Rex Hunt Fishing Adventures **12.00pm** Our House Down Under **12.30** Doing It Up **1.00** Our *House* ***1.30*** *Homefront* ***2.00*** *New Yankee* Workshop **2.30** Home Again **3.00** This Old House **7.30** Rex Hunt

DISCOVERY

4.00pm Rex Hunt Fishing Adventures **4.30** Walker's World **5.00** Flightline **5.30** History's Turning Points **6.00** Animal Doctor **6.30** Alaska's Grizzlies **7.30** Beyond 2000 **8.00** Discover Magazine **9.00** Non-Lethal Weapons **10.00** Ocean Cities **11.00** Forensic Detectives **12.00am** The Old Pyramid **1.00** History's Turning Points **1.30** Flightline

ANIMAL PLANET

12.00pm Horse Tales **12.30** Going Wild **1.00** Nature Watch with Julian Pettifer **1.30** Australia Wild **2.00** Wildlife ER **2.30** *Human/Nature* ***3.30*** *Harry's Practice* **4.00** Jack Hanna's Animal Adventures **4.30** Animal Doctor **5.00** Pet Rescue **5.30** Australia Wild **6.00** The New Adventures of Black Beauty **6.30** Lassie **7.00** Rediscovery of the World: South Africa **8.00** Animal Doctor **8.30** Profiles of Nature **9.30** Emergency Vets **10.00** Deadly Australians **10.30** The Big Animal Show **11.00** Wild *Rescues* **11.30** *Emergency Vets* **12.00am** Close

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

7.00pm Big Guy **7.30** Bali **8.00** African Rhinos **9.00** Extreme Earth **10.00** On the Edge **12.00am** Icebound

HISTORY

4.00pm The World at War **5.00** Four Years of Thunder **6.00** Secrets of the Romanovs **7.00** The Big House

CARLTON FOOD

9.00am Food Network Daily **9.30** Food for Thought **10.00** Who's Cooking Dinner? **10.30** Worrall Thompson Cooks **11.00** What's Cooking? **11.30** Coxon's Kitchen College **12.00pm** Food Network Daily **12.30** For Better, For Worse **1.00** Food for Thought **1.30** The Green Gourmet **2.00** Tessa Bramley's Country Kitchen **2.30** *Food Network Daily* ***3.00*** *Retrospectives* **3.30** Coxon's Kitchen College **4.00** From the Ground Up **4.30** Caribbean Light

LIVING

6.00am Tiny and Crew **6.20** Philbert **6.30** Johnson and Friends **6.45** Tiny Tales **6.50** Polka Dot Shorts **7.00** Practical Parenting **7.05** Professor Bubble **7.30** Caillou **7.35** Bug Alert **7.55** Practical Parenting **8.00** Barney **8.30** Tiny Tales **8.35** Tiny and Crew **8.50** Practical Parenting **9.00** Diet Show **9.30** The Roseanne Show **10.00** Jerry Springer **10.50** Maury Povich **11.40** Brookside **12.10pm** Animal Rescue **12.40** Rescue 911 **1.10** Special Babies **1.40** Beyond Belief **2.10** LA Law **3.10** Living Room **4.00** Michael Cole **4.50** Rolanda **5.40** Ready, Steady, Cook **6.15** Jerry Springer **7.05** Rescue 911 **7.35** Animal Rescue **8.00** Murder Call **9.00 FILM: Family Rescue (TVM 1995)** **11.00** Sex Life Down Under

ZEE TV

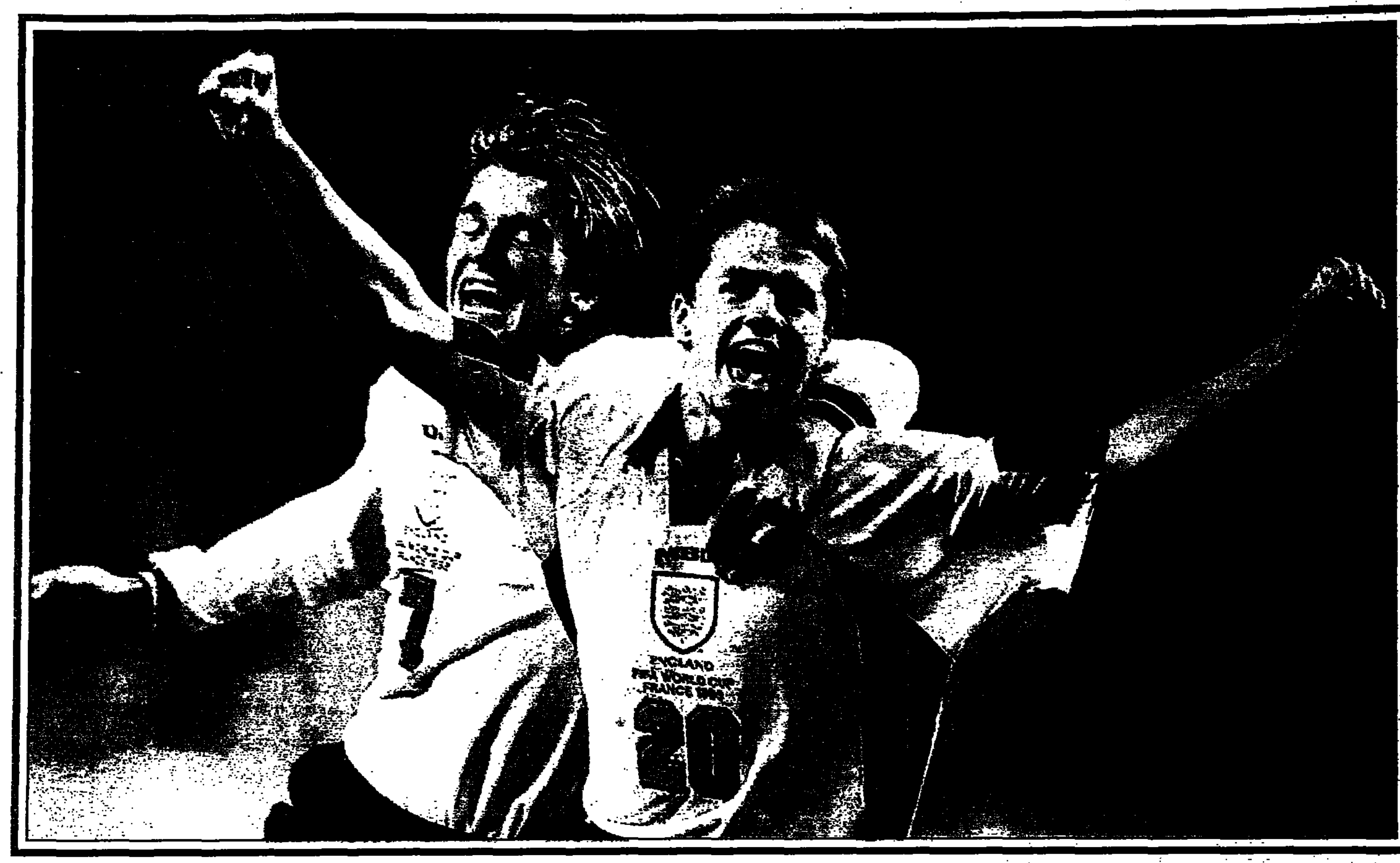
5.00am Cher Raasta **5.30** Music Time **6.00** Hero Kal Aaj Aur **6.30** Awaaz Nayee An **7.00** Faith **7.30** News **8.00** Karoban Duniya **8.30** Sailaab **9.00** Zanjeeren **9.30** Health Show **10.00** Hawaain **11.00** Pot Luck **11.30** Parampara **12.00pm FILM: Gorai Garasani** **3.00** Zee Bangla **3.30** Public Demand **4.00** Campus **4.30** Fardaat Antakshari **5.30** Dareer **6.00** *Top of the Pops* **6.30** Hip Hip Hurray **7.00** Gudgudee **7.30** Cinemagic **8.00** News **8.30** Chehat Aur Nehat **9.00** Himalaya's Hasratein **12.00am** News **12.30** Business Show **1.00** Zee Bangla **1.30** Rashat **2.00 FILM: Pathar Ke Insan** **4.30** An Hour With

CYCLING 45
Hopes ride high for team that is Linda McCartney's legacy

SPORT

CRICKET 49
India and Pakistan remain guardedly optimistic for tour

THURSDAY JANUARY 28 1999



Owen goal, winning shot

THIS memorable image of Michael Owen celebrating scoring a goal for the England football team has won Marc Aspland, *The Times* chief sports photographer, the Fuji World Cup 98 prize for the best picture of the tournament.

Aspland's photograph catches the delight of Owen and David Beckham as they celebrate the 83rd-minute goal that briefly levelled the scores against Romania — who eventually won 2-1 — in the group match in Toulouse in June.

The award, announced at a ceremony at the Guildhall, London, is the second honour in recent weeks for Aspland, 34, from Harpenden, Hertfordshire. Aspland, above, also became the Kodak Royal Photographer of the Year for his picture of the Queen Mother attending Cheltenham races.

Redknapp pays £1.5m for temperamental Italian forward who pushed referee

West Ham gamble on Di Canio

By Matt Dickinson

HARRY REDKNAPP was at pains to point out yesterday that he had sought the advice of one of Paolo Di Canio's former managers before signing the controversial Italian forward. The miracle was that he found one with a nice word to say about him.

Had he turned to Ron Atkinson, for example, Redknapp, the West Ham United manager, would have been told that he had just spent £1.5 million on a player known as "The Volcano". "I have worked with some nutters in my time," Atkinson said, "but Di Canio takes the biscuit."

Atkinson has not been alone in condemning a player who has now moved nine times in his career, rarely without rancour. Nevertheless, his chequered past was not enough to deter West Ham from taking him off a relieved Sheffield Wednesday wage bill for £3 million less than the Yorkshire club paid Celtic for his services 17 months ago. He has signed a 3½-year contract.

Wednesday's only demand was that Di Canio should drop his appeal to the FA Premier League against the fines levied against him since his 11-match ban for pushing Paul Alcock, the referee, to the ground. The player, who had been suspended without pay for refusing to return from Italy since November, agreed, presumably realising that he had no alternative. "It has not been a case of clubs beating a path to our door to sign him," Graham Mackrell, the Wednesday secretary, said.

While Wednesday insisted yesterday that they were supportive of Di Canio after his ban for pushing Alcock, the Italian believes that he was isolated and said that his resultant depression was behind his refusal to return to England until yesterday.

"He was upset because he felt no one at Sheffield contacted him," Redknapp said. "He didn't feel any support. He felt he needed friendship after making a mistake, but he didn't get it." So Redknapp has thrown a protective arm around Di Canio, 30, and will become the latest manager to try to calm a player whose talents have previously persuaded Lazio, Juventus and AC Milan to buy him — not a bad CV and proof of his wonderful attacking skills. However, even Redknapp admitted that it was a mighty gamble.

"Everyone will have their opinion, but mine is the only one that counts," he said. "I have never in my life been afraid to take a chance and don't have the slightest doubt that Paolo's troubles are behind him. Tommy Burns told me that at Celtic he was the best professional he had worked with.

"I love flair players like Ginola, McManaman, people who turn a game with a moment of genius. He can do things most players can't even dream of. I watched him against us for Wednesday on the opening day of the season. He was pure class and I said then that I would love him in my team.

"That tells you he was my first choice and our players are delighted. You should have seen people like Wrighty and Rio Ferdinand when I told them. OK, he pushed a referee, but he is not the first to do that. I can name two other Premiership players guilty of the same thing, but in those cases the referee did not fall over, and that is what caused all the fuss."

It was not the first time, nor is it likely to be the last, that Di Canio is at odds with officialdom, but the player insisted that he would have no problem were he to meet Alcock again. "I made a mistake and I paid a big price," he said. "I am sorry and I just want to play football now. After four months, I have missed playing. I have been watching matches on TV, but it is terrible for your mind when you cannot go out and play.

"I could have moved to other clubs in Europe, but I wanted to come back to England and I believe West Ham are a better team than Wednesday. I have no problems here, certainly not with the referees. I certainly hope I will not be a marked man. I see no reason why I should be."

Amid the fuss over Di Canio, it was almost overlooked that West Ham had also paid Lens £3.5 million for Marc-Vivien Foe, the Cameroon international midfield player, whose huge presence in the dressing-room may even persuade Di Canio to keep his temper. "He's a monster," Redknapp said. "I don't think the physical side of the English game will be a problem, do you?"

A player coveted by Manchester United until he broke his leg last season, Foe, who has signed a 5½-year contract, is likely to go straight into the team to face Wimbledon on Saturday, when he will be an imposing presence in central midfield. Di Canio, who is still recovering his fitness, may have to wait a little longer.

□ Hugo Porfirio, the former West Ham forward, is expected to complete a move from Benfica to Nottingham Forest today, in time to make his debut against Everton at Goodison Park on Saturday. Initially on loan, Porfirio could complete a permanent move if he impresses in Forest's fight against relegation.

McAteer on move, page 48

ANDRE CAMARA

Di Canio, left, and Foe strike up an immediate friendship after signing for West Ham yesterday

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 1626

ACROSS
1 Swivelling wheel (6)
5 Team; swagger *(slang)* (4)
8 Not make it (4)
9 Strange; *snug lair (anag.)* (8)
10 Temporarily lose (8)
11 Cowardly terror (4)
12 Wise guide (6)
14 Twin of 1 (6)
16 Metered form of transport (4)
18 Leg-covering garment (8)
20 *Smallest tea-party member (Alice)* (8)
21 Adore (4)
22 Fabulous story; false idea (4)
23 Complicated mess (6)

DOWN
2 Cupidity (7)
3 Bell-shaped spring flower (5)
4 One selling meals (12)
5 Expressing deep emotion (7)
6 Run-off channel (5)
7 With expressed unwillingness (5,7)
13 Huge success (7)
15 Come apart (7)
17 Torturing pain (5)
19 *Literary gathering; beauty* parlour (5)

SOLUTION TO NO 1625
ACROSS: 4 Enter 7 Trade-off 8 Time 9 Autumnal 10 Vernal 13 Winter 14 Dim sum 15 Mersey 18 Modulate 19 View 20 Negligée 21 Delve
DOWN: 1 Strife 2 Careen 3 Recall 4 Effusive 5 Tinnitus 6 Roller 11 Remedial 12 Aquiline 14 Demand 15 Meekly 16 Ravage 17 Eleven

Walker supplements income

David Powell on the unfortunate timing of a brochure containing endorsements by drug-test athlete

Through the letterbox they came, the daily newspapers with Dougie Walker's photograph prominent on many a back page. It being Wednesday, *Athletics Weekly* joined the thud on to the doormat, slightly heavier than usual.

Inside the magazine was a catalogue, a 96-page guide to power and performance supplements and associated items. Walker appeared on the front page, above two men who would enhance a Mr Universe contest.

If British athletics launching its new governing body on the day that Walker was revealed as the athlete who had returned positive A and B samples from a drug test was the first act of unfortunate timing, here was act two. "The brochure that has appeared this week is a hugely unfortunate coincidence," Nigel Walsh, the editor of the magazine said.

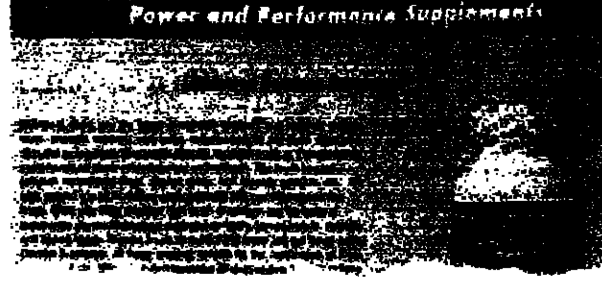
Walker has vigorously denied knowingly taking any banned performance-enhancing substance. In the meantime, though, those with a financial interest in the brochure hope that he will help to sell some of the products. "If it was not so sad for Dougie, it would be comical," Tim Hutchings, consultant for Reebok, Walker's sponsor, said.

The catalogue includes some products accompanied by the warning: "Avoid this if you compete at IOC tested level." This message does not apply to the two Walker endorses. While Walker waits to learn whether he has a case to answer, there has been no suggestion that any of the products are connected with his A and B samples.

That Britain's best-known athletics magazine should be used a vehicle for tempting athletes into taking substances on the edge of legality drew murmurings from within the sport yesterday.

A particular concern is that children form part of the readership. Walsh said that his magazine would be "reviewing the policy on accepting advertising for supplements".

How choice has grown. In 1972, when relatively little was known about performance supplements, word spread that Lasse Viren, a Finn, had won the Olympic 5,000 and 10,000 metres aided by pollen tablets. At colleges in Britain the rush began to find out where they could be bought.

John Gladwin, the 1986 Commonwealth Games 1,500 metres runner-up, is now athletics manager for Nike. Mark Richardson, a Nike athlete and one of Britain's leading 400 metres runners, is among several athletes endorsing products in the brochure. "So long as these products are not on the banned list, I would not be alarmed they are taking them," Gladwin said.

"Some athletes I know are walking a tightrope. Much of it is fear for your diet not giving you enough. Has it moved on from when I was a top athlete? Supplements now are the norm whereas in the old days, it was just the elite athletes who took them."